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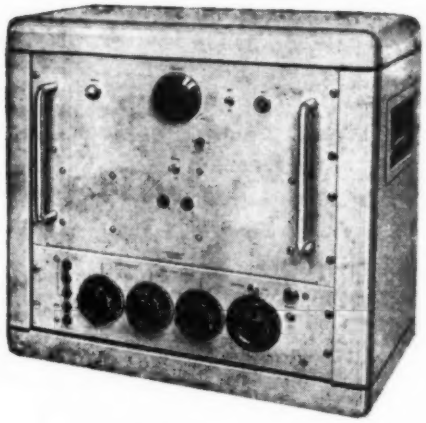


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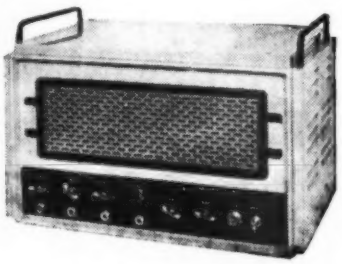
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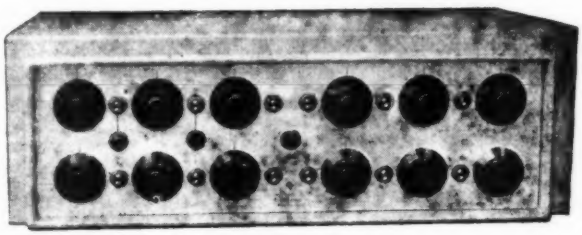
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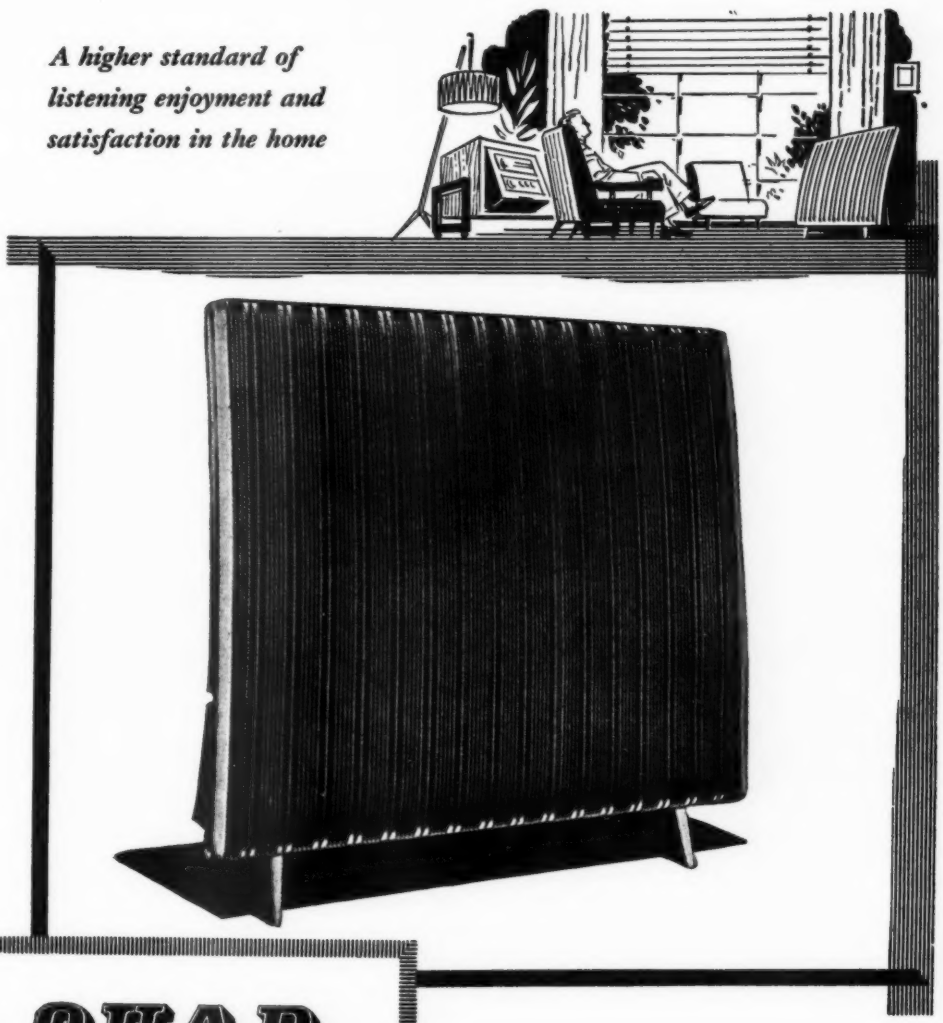


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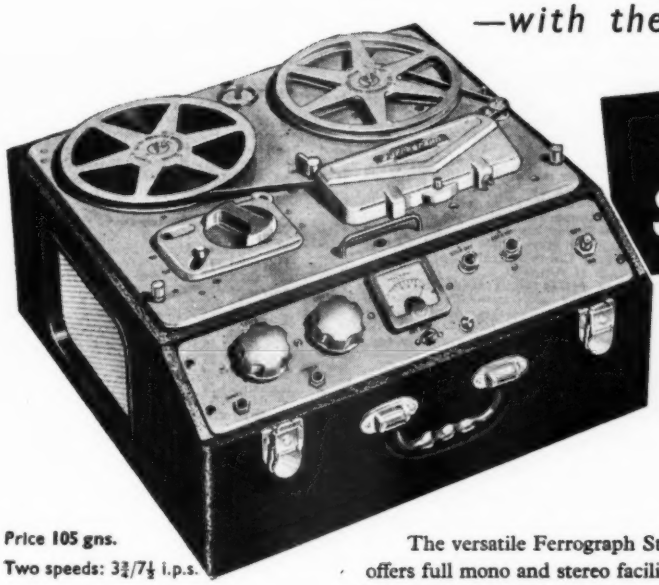
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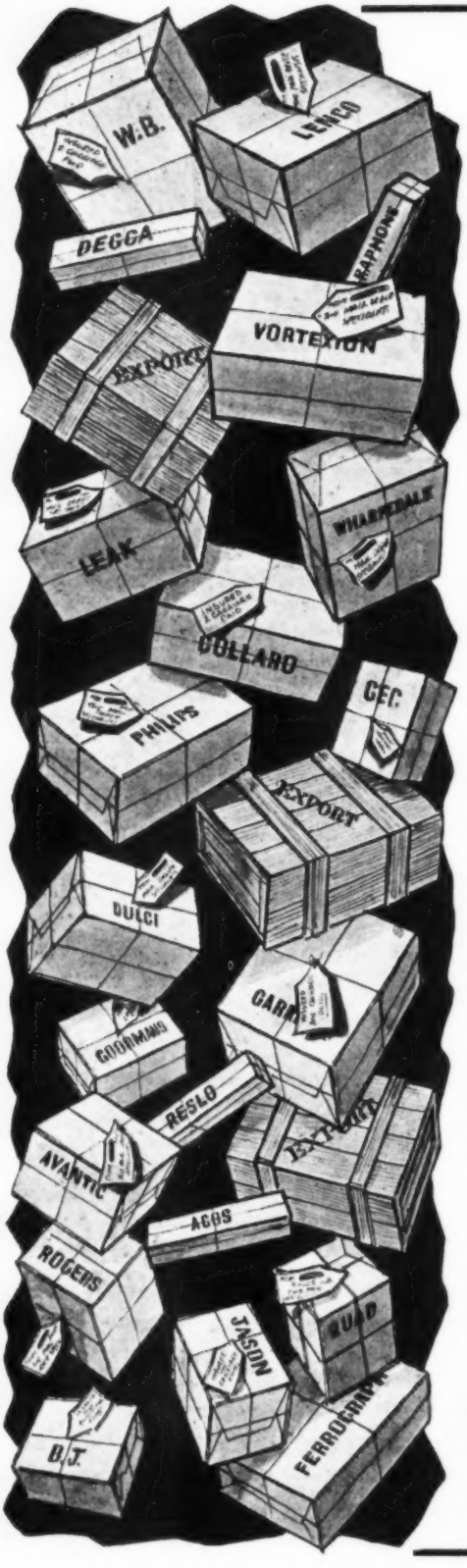
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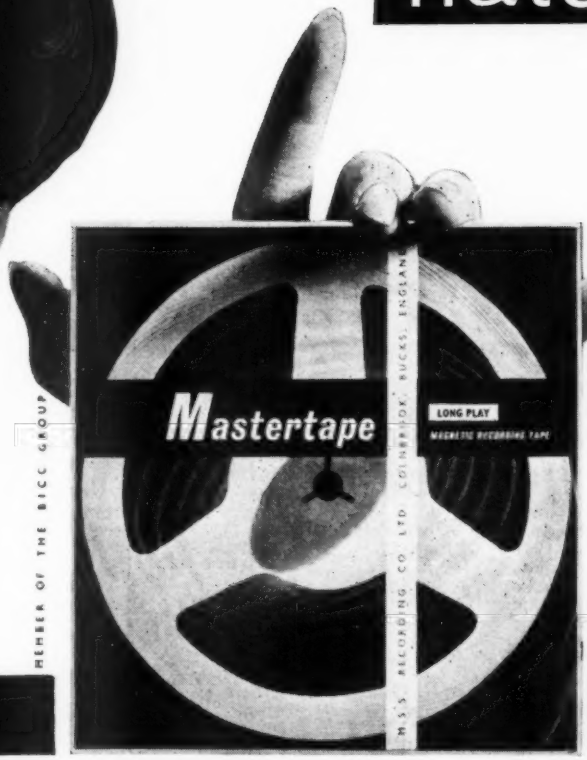


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PROGRAMME

FRIDAY, 18th MARCH

8.30 p.m. Film Programme: "Science in the Orchestra"; "The Instruments of the Orchestra"; "Fra Diavolo" with Laurel and Hardy).

SATURDAY, 19th MARCH

9.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m. "Curiouser and Curiouser", a record programme introduced by Donald Aldous; "The History of a Record Company", presented by John Ridley of Audio Fidelity; "The Art of Wilhelm Kempff", a record programme presented by Edward Greenfield of "The Guardian".

SATURDAY, 19th MARCH (Cont.)

2.30 p.m.-7.00 p.m. Demonstrations by the major record companies and selected manufacturers of High Fidelity domestic stereo equipment. (*These Saturday Afternoon Demonstrations are open to the General Public*).

8.30 p.m. "Fra Diavolo" (Auber). A complete opera performance in costume. Sung in English.

11.00 p.m. Stereo Music for dancing. (Records played on the Deccola)

SUNDAY, 20th MARCH

10.00 a.m. "A short history of music without music tears", presented with projections and recordings by Denis Stevens.

11.30 a.m. "QUORUM." A Technical discussion with Percy Wilson, Donald Aldous and Ralph West. (Questions welcomed).

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMME:

11.30 a.m. "The Music of Friends", a programme of records presented by Denis Stevens.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON at 2.45 p.m. Live Orchestral Concert with soloists and the Orchestra of the Royal Manchester College of Music, conducted by David Jordan: Overture The Mastersingers (Wagner); Arias from "The Magic Flute", "Marriage of Figaro", "Don Giovanni" (Mozart); Piano Concerto 3 (Beethoven); Symphony No. 4 in G (Dvořák).
SUNDAY EVENING at 6 p.m. "The Spoken Word on Disc"—C. V. C. Clinton-Baddeley of Jupiter Recordings. 9 p.m. Arthur Haddy, the Chief Recording Engineer of Decca talks about FFRR and FFSS.

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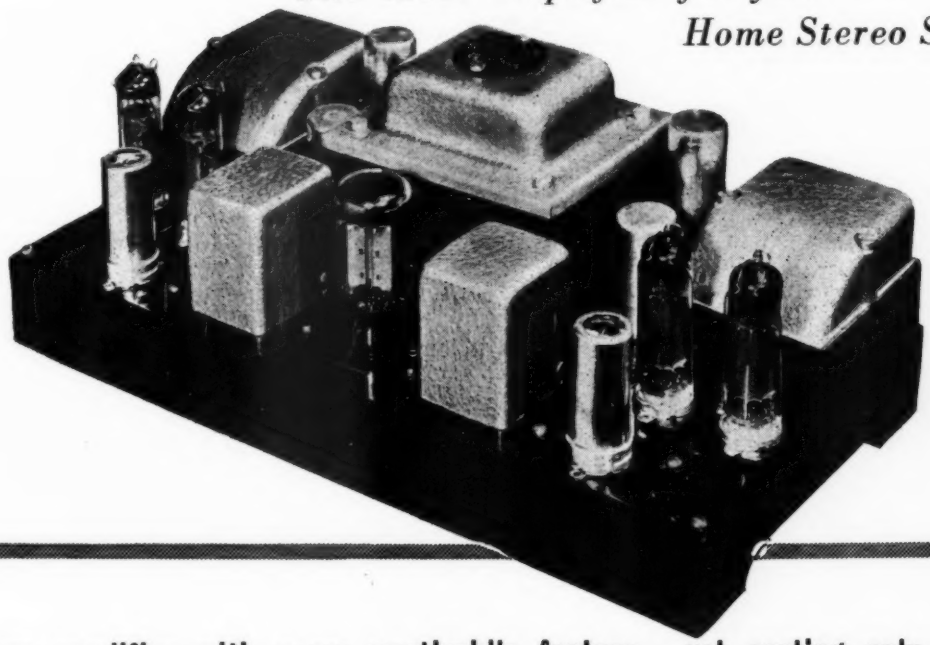
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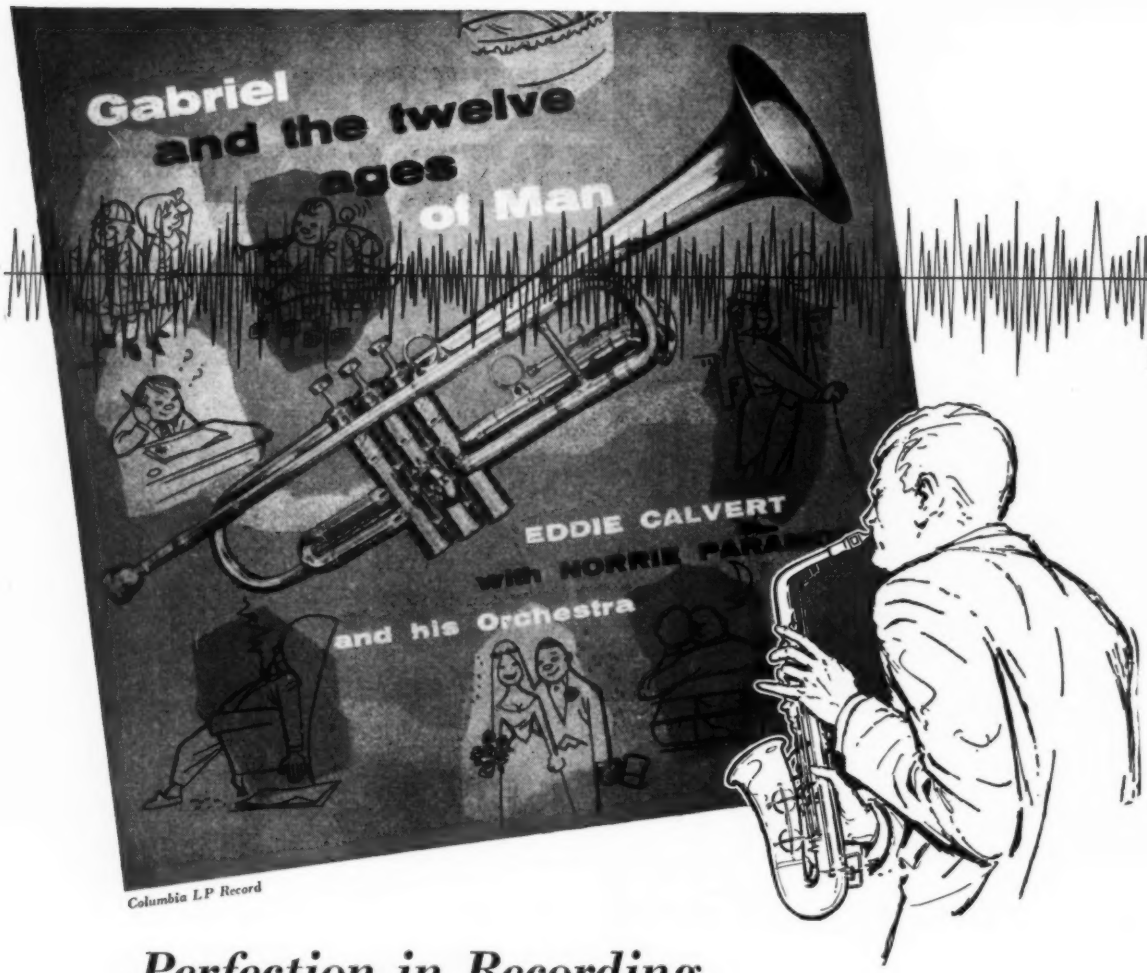
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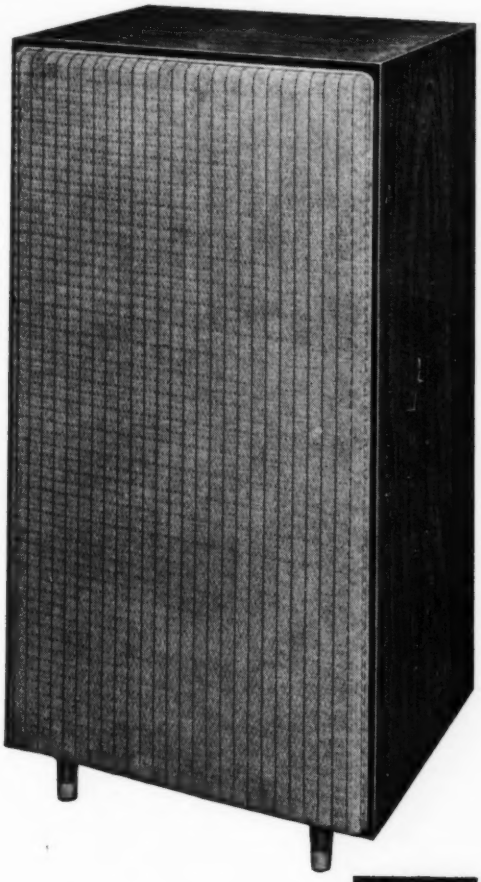
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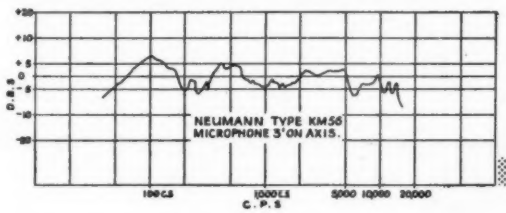
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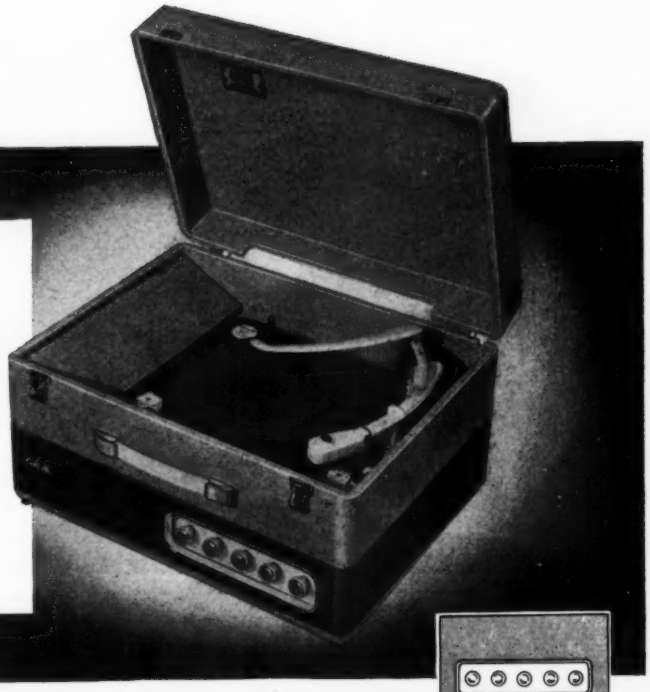
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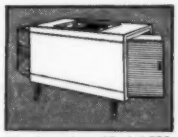
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A QUARTERLY RETROSPECT

By JOHN WARRACK

SCARCELY was the November issue of THE GRAMOPHONE out when my telephone was ringing and there on the line was what is usually called a "spokesman" from Philips with the assurance that the matter complained of in my last Quarterly was being attended to. Their exciting international list, so long withheld, is to be fed to us in small issues, I was told; and a few days later I received some of the first of what are promised to be regular batches. Apart from these (to which I shall return), the list of availabilities includes *Tiefland*, *Linda di Chamounix*, *Les Pêcheurs des Perles*, three early Mozart operatic fragments, Requiems by Mozart and Cherubini, Bruckner's third symphony, and the Mengelberg recording of the *St. Matthew Passion* with Karl Erb as the Evangelist. So, having reproached Philips, I now gladly and gratefully congratulate them on an admirable move. There is so far no news of what the future holds: let us hope that the issues will not be too sparse and widely separated, and that they will soon contain *Wozzeck* and *Moses und Aron*—twin towering masterpieces of our century which invite and overwhelmingly reward the special intimacy with an opera that the gramophone can bring.

Meanwhile Universal Edition, whose London office is at 24 Great Pulteney Street, W.1, had taken matters into their own hands and made an arrangement direct with the Dutch headquarters of Philips to import the complete Webern set, long glimpsed only on the shelves of returning travellers. Universal also publish nearly all the scores, and though the album of four records already costs a little over £9, I would urge those (libraries especially) who buy the set to invest in the scores as well. (We understand that these records are now available to special order direct from Philips.—ED.)

The legend has grown up of Webern as an inflexibly austere, computational composer, and his works have been seized upon as ammunition by those who mock modern music for a string of pops, squeaks and grunts. First he was scorned and neglected by the musical world, and now he has been elevated to a position I am convinced he would reject as misrepresenting him—that of father-figure to the young school of total serialists for whom the very strict dodecaphony he used has become not a means to expressing music of incredible subtlety and sensibility, but a self-justifying artistic end. Inferior, pretentious work is now defended no longer by reference to its moral tone or gripping literary programme, but with an accompanying note (regarded as being as essential a part of the work as was the programme of a tone-poem) in which a technical specification is couched in language so dense as to defy all but the most patient cryptographers. This kind of music rallies round the flag "post-Webern"; but logicians know the elementary fallacy *post hoc ergo propter hoc*—one event may follow another without arising from it. Webern always regarded his craft as his own business, and was scrupulously concerned not to make the listener aware of how the cogs meshed. Indeed, his reluctance to supplement the bare notes of his music with helpful comment has resulted in something of a lost tradition of performance: the only important criticism to be levelled against Robert Craft's devoted, brilliantly accurate performances on these four records is that his reverence for Webern's art makes him inclined to regard any imaginative interpretation as what Communists call "deviationist" or "revisionist". One of Philips's other new releases (A01178L), on which the Juilliard Quartet play Webern's Five Movements (Op. 5), shows that a bolder, even somewhat personalised account of the music may run greater risks with this meticulous art but brings greater rewards. Masterpieces do not need cosseting.

I hope that no one will, through this current fencing-off of Webern with truculent praise, come to regard him as a totally remote, hieratic figure. True, some of the music on these records is of an anguished, solitary complexity which I at any rate do not expect to master just yet—I am thinking chiefly of the Op. 20 trio, a crisis work in Webern's output. But let anyone with an honest love of music listen attentively to, let us say, the Op. 24 concerto for nine instruments or the Op. 21 symphony, or the cantata *Das Augenlicht*—I cannot see him failing to respond to the transparent, gravely classical beauty of the music.

Webern is, of course, by his nature, an extremist figure for all that; and I am sure that though he is likely to become more accurately and widely appreciated than at present, he will never be a general taste. It is very understandable that an artist of such obsessive integrity, concerned to reject the smothering example of his direct ancestor, Wagner, gifted with an unbelievably fine ear and condemned to total neglect, should in this loneliness develop an art based on the hyper-acuity of his own sensibilities. There is surely very little more to it than that—and all the post-Webern manifestos about evolutionary compulsion and the necessity to rediscover the single note (whatever that means) are just a boring excrescence. If you demand a historical justification, you may describe him as representing a normal pattern of extremely sharp reaction against a tradition gradually intensifying to the point where it becomes no longer tolerable. As Pasternak has pointed out in another connection, a man strong and singleminded enough to carry through a revolution will be the same intransigent fellow when he has achieved his purpose. There is no yielding in Webern's later art. But his avoidance of dogmatic utterance, his unswerving love and understanding of the very substance out of which music is created, make Stravinsky's former announcements about music's non-expressive quality temporarily line their author alongside Futurist and Anti-Art eccentrics like Marinetti and Russolo. Stravinsky himself has, thanks in large measure to inoculations given by Craft, found a fascinating regenerative force in Webern: we may, without pressing comparison too far, detect something of the beautiful *Agon* score in the second of the Op. 6 orchestral pieces, of "Surge, aquilo" from the *Canticum Sacrum* in the third of the Op. 23 Hildegard Jone settings. For the plain listener there is what Webern's most distinguished English pupil, Humphrey Searle, once described to me as the sense of a man who more than anyone of his time knew what he was doing. For all the smokescreens puffed round Webern's art from opposite quarters and for all the difficulty much of it presents, we recognise a composer who treasures the elemental sounds of music and rejoices in their action.

The Philips record of Webern's string quartet movements already mentioned is a

particularly valuable issue, for it also contains Schoenberg's great 4th quartet and Berg's quartet, Op. 3. It is thus a neat symposium of some of the finest and most characteristic works of the so-called Second Viennese School. The Juilliard's performances are for the most part tremendously strong and authoritative, though unexpectedly they show signs of hesitation and fall into some of their rare ensemble lapses in the comparatively straightforward second Schoenberg quartet, which is coupled with No. 3 on another Philips disc (A01177L).

Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, another new Philips release (A01307L), receives a performance from the composer which is startlingly inferior to Leonard Bernstein's with the same, but transformed, New York Philharmonic Orchestra (ABL3268). You would naturally expect Bernstein to have all the extrovert energy to release the work's explosive virtuosity. Dazzled, I turned to the Stravinsky performance half expecting a precision and cool authority, perhaps also a communication of the primitive identification with Russian soil that Stravinsky as every other Russian exile feels powerfully, which might show Bernstein up in a superficial light. Not a bit of it: unsurpassed as he is as an interpreter of much of his later music, Stravinsky seems unwilling now to re-enter that phase of excitement and revolution which *The Rite* embodies, and the performance limps. But the other is really a complete justification of Bernstein. This fantastically clever man has sometimes seemed to have it all rather too good to be true. Ask him for a mammoth symphony, a satirical opera, the fastest and brightest piano-playing in Ravel's concerto, the score of a new type of socially aware musical, a television lecture, an ambassadorial European tour as conductor—Super Len, America's tousle-headed boy in the midnight-blue opera cloak, will deliver the goods by return. Is this just the usual English stuffiness when confronted by cleverness? I don't think so. We should indeed be grateful to have, streaking across the scene and exuberantly inhabiting a really alive, contemporary world, a musician of such brilliant versatility. There is no chink in that gleaming armour; but who is inside it? Bernstein's performances of the classics tend to have a rootless feeling about them until the temperature of the music rises to the fever pitch which matches his normal pulse rate. It is, in fact, essentially to violent physical or nervous excitement that he responds fully—how far superior such numbers in *West Side Story* as the Rumble or "Gee, Officer Krupke" were to the sentimental songs, which merely fell back on commercial cliché. He is, happily, able to communicate this thrill to a virtuoso orchestra, and he comes impressively into his own with music in which virtuosity of *expression* is a vital element—music such as Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole*, *La Valse* and (need I say) *Bolero* on GBL5513; and still more in *The Rite*. Listening to Bernstein's performance made me realise anew how active in contemporary music the piece still is—in Bernstein's own music, too, and one of the debts is here repaid with a natural feeling for Stravinsky's rhythms that treats them not as a tricky series of displaced beats but as a living, flexible, thrilling musical language. That the players are with him to a degree of unanimity clearly springing not merely from crack discipline but from innate sense of style is a historical circumstance. I doubt if this performance would have been possible when the work was new: a few decades of jazz, and of the virtuoso brass chorus-work of the best bands, have set up new standards, formed a new atmosphere that anyone more than half-awake does not ignore; and when *The Rite* responds so fully to this new world we find another proof that it is more than a great document of its age—a timeless masterpiece.

The Communists' theory of "Socialist realism" in the arts has come in for some hard knocks in the West, largely as a result of the constraint on such men as Prokofiev and Shostakovich, but more basically for the dishonesty of an attitude that is dictated from headquarters and must veer according to the latest orders of the day. The idea's own condemnation is the shockingly poor quality of most of the o.k. works, as the lack until recently of recorded examples reflects: it is the real artist who gets into difficulties, while the second-rater can joyfully seize his chance since it only requires sound schooling, and the less imagination or integrity the better, to churn out an acceptably "optimistic" symphony. The authoritative Russian music critic Joseph Stalin required composers "to learn to master all musical resources for the complete expression of the ideas and passions motivating Soviet heroes". Now the later days of the Stalin regime, which saw the Zhdanov tribunal that attacked leading composers, are now spoken of with horror even by the most loyal comrades. Nevertheless, *plus ça change* . . . Krushchev recently warned those members of the Writers' Congress who saw the task of literature, even within realist framework, as a commentary on life in all its aspects: "So listen, dear friends, if it is anyone who reveals and lays bare failings and faults, and whose hand will not falter in so doing, it will be the Party and its Central Committee." Other parts of the speech were more genial and tolerant, but Mr. K. left no one (and that includes us) in any doubt that the function of the Communist artist is still to inspire or entertain those engaged in the social struggle, not to waste effort on selfish introspection or spiritual development.

So far few records of authorised works have reached us from Russia. Nor is there much from Hungary, where the situation is especially confused, or from Poland: traditional enemies of Russia and torn between a geographical commitment east and a cultural pull west, the Poles have concentrated not on sending us records but in redecorating their own house in the latest designs with a vigorous Warsaw Contemporary Music Festival. But the Czechs, quickest of the satellites to toe the thin Red line, have started following up the success of the best Supraphons with contemporary works. Alas, the recent records of pieces by Hanus, Ridky, Jeremias and others show that the Czechs' wonderful natural musicality is thoroughly cowed.

Now the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and all this may seem too dreary to be worth discussion so long as the puddings remain so stodgy. But the good impulse behind what has turned out to be such a sorry scheme is a wish for music not to escape from the understanding of the plain man. All of us must sympathise, perhaps even take some responsibility for what is partly a reaction against the extremes of Western cerebration and cliquishness. The more really good popular works the better: so although it is comparatively slight—an interim solution rather than the major reconciliation towards which thoughtful Western composers are working—let us welcome Shostakovich's new piano concerto (LPV481). This is an admirably bright, honest, individual piece, and within the limits that must still operate it does reconcile the internal demands of integrity and the external ones posted on the Kremlin walls. Of course, the simple answer is that Shostakovich is a real composer, and can refine his style to this extreme simplicity without losing his grip on it. If proof be required, turn the record over: the concerto by the Czech Viktor Kalabis attempts an identical feat, but merely dances on its compulsory strings without ever, like Pinocchio, turning into a real boy.

Long before all this reared its head, Shostakovich had made his name with his first symphony. Only his 5th and 10th symphonies, to my mind, have equalled this essay in the form. The L.S.O. play it brilliantly under Jean Martinon on R.C.A. RB16170 (stereo SB2051), but there is a ridiculously unnecessary turn (just before the allegro of the finale), and the recording is variable—for instance, on the monophonic version at any rate the vital clarinet tearaway just at this allegro, though obviously accurately played, is muddied over. The *Age of Gold* ballet music on the reverse is best forgotten—the young Shostakovich in the stranglehold of Socialist realism.

The third of a Hindemith triptych brings us very belatedly what may be the last of Dennis Brain (unless the rumoured Britten Third Canticle really exists). This is a miraculous performance of the horn concerto, well worth it if only for the way he "tickles" the tiny scherzo; the coupling is the somewhat contrived but soberly effective *Symphonia Serena*. Also highly rewarding is Charles Mackerras's Janacek record. The Sinfonietta, with its flaring fanfares, comes off brilliantly, and is something of a triumph for Pye (CML33007). And Mackerras, a Talich pupil who knows the Czech idiom thoroughly, draws more passionate, humane playing from the *ad hoc* Pro Arte Orchestra in the *Katya Kabanova* prelude than does Krombholc in the complete Supraphon recording. He fills this side with some enthralling Janacek opera preludes—the odd violin concerto that prefaces *From the House of the Dead* (*when* shall we have a production of this blinding masterpiece?); the *Makropulos Case* prelude, which is among the best music of the opera; and the *Jealousy* prelude to *Jenufa*, gripping but rightly discarded in favour of that wonderful opening with the steadily ticking mill-wheel.

BEECHAM'S "CARMEN"

By JOHN REID*

WHEN E.M.I.'s International Artists Department decided that a new recording for "His Master's Voice" of Bizet's extremely popular opera *Carmen* was long overdue, the choice of conductor was obvious. Ever since his memorable opera seasons in London, many years ago, *Carmen* has been a favourite of Sir Thomas Beecham and it would be impossible to imagine any one more capable of producing an outstanding recording of this work. The choice of Carmen herself, on the other hand, was far from obvious and in fact Sir Thomas expressed the opinion that there was no singer able to interpret the part as he saw it. The names of several leading singers were suggested, but none was acceptable to Sir Thomas. He saw Carmen, not as the generally accepted mezzo, the amoral libertine, but the young *ingénue* more sinned against than sinning, rather as a soprano role.

Pondering on a singer to interpret Carmen as Sir Thomas sees her, the thoughts of the Artists' Department turned to the greatest living Spanish soprano—who better than Victoria de los Angeles to sing the part? But the question was, would she agree? It was not in her repertoire and she had never sung Carmen on the stage. When she was approached, Victoria de los Angeles was not enthusiastic. To learn a new part, specifically for a recording and in the middle of a very busy career is no small commission, but eventually she was persuaded to undertake it. How well she succeeded has been summed up by Gavotty, the noted French critic, writing in *Figaro*, "the wonderful Carmen of Victoria de los Angeles would be difficult to equal".

The other leading roles, Don José, Micaëla, Escamillo, were not difficult to cast The world-famous tenor, Nicolai Gedda, was available, and Janine Micheau and Ernest Blanc were well practised in these parts, having sung them frequently at the Opéra Comique in Paris. The French National Radio Orchestra and Chorus and the remaining soloists were engaged and the recording started in the Salle Wagram in Paris, the home of pugilists and political meetings—perhaps a not inappropriate setting. The date was April 1958.

Sir Thomas first made a complete unrehearsed recording of the entire opera so as to hear the performance as an entity; the clay to be shaped by unremitting hard work into the final form and structure of a great performance. This approach by Sir Thomas—indisputably the ideal way in which to mould a great performance—led to certain difficulties. Sir Thomas insisted that all artists should be present at all times during the recording, but some of the artists were already committed to other work and delays occurred.

Sir Thomas himself was committed to visit Argentina, where he was to conduct a season of opera at the Teatro Colon, and as the time for this drew near, it became obvious that *Carmen* could not be finished before he left. Sir Thomas, as in his performances, is uncompromising—unless a recording reaches his own very high standards, he will not pass it and this admits no race against time. Nevertheless a great deal had been achieved. Sir Thomas now had on tape the complete recording and many reels of more polished work. The rough diamond had begun to take shape under the hands of the master cutter and even now some facets had begun to gleam with their finished lustre, but the perfect jewel was not ready.

Sir Thomas Beecham left for South America, taking with him the recorded material and for over a year he worked quietly, studying and noting detail, planning and assessing the results of his work so far. The Card Trio particularly did not satisfy him. The intricate balance of the voices was wrong and it would have to be re-recorded.

In September 1959 he returned to Paris and the cast re-assembled. Now the performance began to take shape. Eventually, the difficult Card Trio was accomplished to the conductor's satisfaction and the work moved steadily forward, taking on its final form. Very few recordings can ever have been made with so much care. Not one bar was recorded in haste. Every aria was polished to perfection.

At last it was done, and Sir Thomas Beecham left for the South of France. Now began the work of the engineers. Lacquer discs were made of every take and they were all sent to Beecham for selection and assembly into the final master recording. As Sir Thomas himself commented, he has been accused of many things but never of lack of industry. The master recording was put together in London and from this lacquer discs were again made and sent to Sir Thomas, now in Cologne, by helicopter. At last he was satisfied. The new and probably the greatest performance of *Carmen* had been recorded.

This has been Sir Thomas's first major operatic venture since his superb recording of *Bohème*. All emphasis has been placed on achieving the finest musical interpretation and no attempt has been made to produce a spectacular technical recording at the expense of the music. Nevertheless, this guiding principle in itself has produced a recording that is technically of a very high standard which is all to the good, since what should a record be but a permanent memory of a great musical performance?

**International Division of E.M.I. Ltd. A review of this recording of "Carmen", by Philip Hope-Wallace, appears on page 423 of this issue.*

INDEX TO REVIEWS

★ *indicates a stereophonic recording*

	Page
ADAM	
Giselle—excerpts	428
ARDITI	
Il Bacio	429
Parla Waltz	429
BACH	
Cantatas Nos. 34 and 56	420
Jesu, joy of Man's desiring	423
Organ Works—Fernando Germani	419
BANTOCK	
Celtic Symphony: The Frogs: The Women's Festival	433
BEETHOVEN	
'Cello Sonatas Nos. 2 and 5	417
'Cello Sonata No. 3	417
Piano Concerto No. 3★	405
Piano Concerto No. 5, "Emperor"★	405
Piano Trio No. 3	418
Piano Trio No. 4, "Geister"	418
Septet, Op. 20	417
Sonata for 'cello and piano, Op. 17	418
Symphony No. 9, "Choral"	405
BERLIOZ	
Damnation of Faust—Hungarian March★	416
The Trojans—excerpts★	416
BIZET	
L'Arlesienne Suites Nos. 1 and 2★ (mono also)	405
Carmen—complete	423
Carmen Suite—excerpts★	405
BOITO	
Mefistofele—excerpts★	429, mono 429, 430
BORODIN	
Prince Igor—excerpt★	417
BRAHMS	
Academic Festival Overture★	406
Piano Concerto No. 1★	406
Piano Concerto No. 2	406
Piano Quartet No. 3	418
Piano Works—Abbey Simon	420
Symphony No. 4★ (mono also)	406
Tragic Overture★	406, 416
Variations on a Theme of Haydn, "St. Anthony Chorale"★	406
BRUCKNER	
Symphony No. 3	407
CASALS	
Les Rois Mages	418
CHABRIER	
Espana★ (mono also)	405
Marche joyeuese★ (mono also)	405
CHOPIN	
Preludes, Op. 28, Nos. 1-24	420
Les Sylphides—complete	407
COPLAND	
Danzon Cubano★	407
Rodeo★	407
El Salon Mexico★	407
CORNET	
Salve Regina	420
DEBUSSY	
Berceuse heroique★	407
Marche Ecossaise★	407
Piano Pieces—Franz Holetschek	418
Violin Sonata in G minor	418
DELIBES	
Coppelia Ballet—excerpts	428
DELIUS	
On hearing the first cuckoo in Spring	428
DONIZETTI	
Linda di Chamounix—complete	424
DUKAS	
L'Apprenti Sorcier★ (mono also)	408
DVORAK	
'Cello Concerto, Op. 104★ (mono also)	408
Serenade for Strings, Op. 22	408
Serenade in D minor, Op. 44	408
ELGAR	
Variations on an Original Theme, "Enigma Variations"	409
FAURE	
Elegie	418
Violin Sonata No. 1	418
FOERSTER	
From Shakespeare—Orchestral Suite	409
FOSTER	
Stephen Foster Melodies	433

INDEX TO REVIEWS—(*continued*)

FRANCK *Page*
Symphonic Variations★ (mono also) 409

GIBBONS
Nunc Dimittis 423

GLIERE
Russian Sailors' Dance★ 417

GLUCK
Sinfonia in G major 409

GOUNOD
Faust—excerpts 424

GRANADOS
Goyescas★ 416

GRIEG
Piano Concerto in A minor★ (mono also) 409
Symphonic Dances, Op. 64—complete★ 409
Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34★ 409

HANDEL
Israel in Egypt—complete★ (mono also) 420
Messiah—excerpts 421

HAYDN
The Seasons—complete 429
String Quartet, Op. 64, No. 5, "The Lark" 418

HOLST
Suites Nos. 1 and 2 428

JANACEK
The Cunning Little Vixen—excerpts 424
Jenufa—excerpts 424
The Makropulos Case—excerpts 424

KUHNEL
Sonata for viola da gamba and continuo No. 7 .. 419

LALO
Symphonie Espagnole 410

LANNER
Waltzes 433

LEONCAVALLO
I Pagliacci—excerpts★ ..... 416, 429, mono 429, 431

LISZT
Faust Symphony★ (mono also) 410
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2★ 416
Mephisto Waltz★ ..... 416, mono 410, 414
Orpheus—Symphonic Poem★ (mono also) 410

LITOLFF
Concerto Symphonique—Scherzo only★ (mono also) 409

McBRIDE
Mexican Rhapsody★ 416

MAHLER
Symphony No. 1 411

MASCAGNI
L'Amico Fritz—excerpts★ 416
Cavalleria Rusticana—excerpts 430, 431

MASSENET
Le Cid—excerpts 428

MENDELSSOHN
Hebrides Overture, "Fingal's Cave"★ 416
A Midsummer Night's Dream—excerpts 411
Octet, Op. 20 417
Symphony No. 3, "Scotch" 411

MEYERBEER
Les Patineurs—excerpts 407, 428

MITCHELL
Kentucky Mountain Portraits★ (mono also) .. 416

MORLEY
Magnificat 423

MOUSSORGSKY
Boris Godunov—excerpts★ 417
Khovantschina—excerpts★ 416
Night on a Bare Mountain★ (mono also) 416

MOZART
Arias for Soprano and Orchestra 422
Credo Mass, K.257—excerpts 421
German Dances: K.600, Nos. 1 and 2; K.602, Nos. 1 and 2; K.605, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 411
March No. 2, K.335 409
Missa Brevis, K.275—excerpts 421
Le Nozze di Figaro—excerpts 430
L'Oca del Cairo, K.422—excerpts 425
Piano Concerto No. 24 411
Lo Sposo deluso, K.430—excerpts 425
Zaide, K.344—complete 425
Die Zauberflote—excerpts 430

NELSON
Savannah River Holiday★ (mono also) 416

NOVAK
The Lantern—excerpts 428

OFFENBACH *Page*
Gaiete Parisienne—excerpts★ 412
Tales of Hoffman—excerpts★ 416

PONCHIELLI
La Gioconda—Dance of the Hours 407

PORTER
Poem and Dance 416

PROKOFIEV
'Cello Sonata, Op. 119 417
Love of Three Oranges—Suite★ 412
Overture Russe★ (mono also) 412
Symphony No. 7★ (mono also) 412

PUCCINI
La Boheme—excerpts★ ..... 429, mono 429, 430
Gianni Schicchi—excerpts★ ..... 430, mono 429, 430
Madama Butterfly—excerpts★ (mono also) 430
Manon Lescaut—excerpts★ 416, 430
Tosca—complete★ (mono also) 425
Tosca—excerpts★ (mono also) 430
Turandot—excerpts 430

RACHMANINOV
Symphony No. 2★ (mono also) 412

RAVEL
Bolero★ ..... 405, 407, 408, mono 408
Piano Concerto in G major★ 413
La Valse★ 407

RESPIGHI
The Pines of Rome★ (mono also) 416

RICHTER
String Quartet, Op. 5, No. 1 418

RIEGGER
New Dance 416

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
Capriccio Espagnole★ (mono also) 416
The Golden Cockerel—Suite★ 412
Russian Easter Festival Overture★ 417
Scheherazade 413
The Snow Maiden—Dance of the Buffoons★ 417

ROSSINI
Album de Musique 422
Il Barbiere di Siviglia—excerpts 431

ROSSINI-RESPIGHI
La Boutique Fantasque—excerpts 428

SAINT-SAENS
Danse Macabre 435
Samson and Delilah—excerpts★ 427

SCHMIDT
Notre Dame—excerpts★ 416

SCHUBERT
Lieder—Erna Berger 422
Symphony No. 9★ 413

SCHUMANN
Manfred Overture, Op. 115 413
Symphony No. 1, "Spring" 413
Symphony No. 2 428

SHOSTAKOVICH
Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 101★ 413

SIBELIUS
Finlandia 435
Valse Triste★ 416

STRAUSS, JOHANN
Graduation Ball Ballet—excerpts★ 412
A Night in Vienna—excerpts 427
Voices of Spring 429

STRAUSS, FAMILY
Waltzes, Galops and Polkas★ .... 433, mono 433, 434

SULLIVAN
H.M.S. Pinafore—complete★ (mono also) 427

SUPPE
Light Cavalry Overture 435

TELEMANN
Oboe Concerto in E minor 414

TCHAIKOVSKY
Eugene Onegin—excerpts 428
Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32 414
Hamlet Overture, Op. 67a 414
Nutcracker Ballet—excerpts 428
Piano Concerto No. 1 414
Serenade Melancolique 410
Sleeping Beauty Ballet—excerpts★ 414
Symphony No. 6, "Pathetique"★ (mono also) .. 413
Swan Lake Ballet—complete 428
Swan Lake Ballet—excerpts★ ..... 414, mono 428
1812 Overture★ 416

THOMAS
Mignon—excerpts 430

VARDELL *Page*
Joe Clark steps out★ (mono also) 416

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
English Folk Song Suite 428
Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis 409
For all the Saints 423
Symphony No. 9 415
Toccata Marziale 428

VERDI
Aida—excerpts★ ..... 429, mono 415, 429, 430
Un Ballo in Maschera—excerpts 429
Falstaff—excerpts 429
La Forza del Destino—excerpts 415
Giovanna d'Arco—excerpt 415
Nabucco—excerpts 416, 429, 430
Otello—excerpts 429
Rigoletto—excerpts★ ..... 429, mono 429, 430
Simon Boccanegra—excerpts 429
La Traviata—excerpts★ .... 416, mono 415, 428, 429
Il Trovatore—excerpts 429, 430
I Vespri Siciliani—excerpt 415

VITASEK
Minuets Nos. 1-4 411

VIVALDI
Gloria in D major★ 422
Motetto a canto, "O qui coeli terraeque"★ 422

WAGNER
A Faust Overture 410
Gotterdammerung—excerpts 415
Lohengrin—excerpts 415
Parsifal—excerpts 415
Tannhauser—excerpts★ ..... 430, mono 415, 430
Tristan und Isolde—excerpts 415
Die Walkure—excerpts 415

WEBER
Invitation to the Dance★ 416

COLLECTIONS
Brass Band Music—"All Stars" Brass Band 434
Folk Songs—Alfred Deller 422
Historic records—Lotte Lehmann 431
—Frida Leider and Lauritz Melchior 431
—Bidu Sayao 431
—Emile Scaremberg 431
—Luisa Tetrazzini 431
—Helen Traubel 431
Humorous record—Stanley Holloway 427
Military Band Music—Band of the Royal Scots Greys 433, 434
—Banda Taurina★ 433
—Frederick Fennell★ (mono also) 433
—Pride of the '48★ (mono also) 434
Music of Wales 433
Pipe Music—Dagenham Girl Pipers 434
Poetry readings—Robert Donat 427
Psalms 423
Soviet Army Ensemble★ 434
Viennese Student and Heurigen Songs—Erich Kunz, Julius Patzak 434
Washington Cathedral Choir 423
Emlyn Williams Talks 428

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★ TITLE INDEX
★ ARTIST INDEX
★ OPERATIC INDEX

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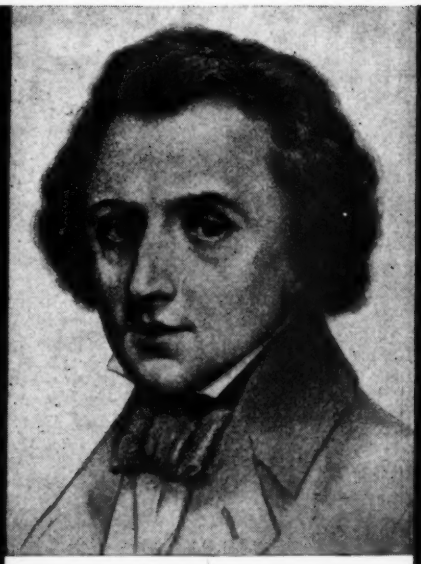
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By

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ALEC ROBERTSON . LIONEL SALTER . DENIS STEVENS . ROGER WIMBUSH



★ *indicates a stereophonic recording*

ORCHESTRAL

BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral". Joan Sutherland (soprano), **Norma Procter** (contralto), **Anton Dermota** (tenor), **Arnold van Mill** (bass), **Suisse Romande Orchestra** conducted by **Ernest Ansermet** with the Chorale de Brassus and Choeur des Jeunes de l'Eglise Nationale Vaudoise. Decca Ace of Clubs ACL77 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.).

I wonder if some record companies realise how much a bit of carelessness in putting the music on to disc may decide the prospective buyer against it, even though the carelessness is momentary. I have reviewed elsewhere in this issue a Grieg record on which a final chord is prematurely lopped off, a small defect, it may seem, but tiresome enough to make me look around for a recording where such a fault doesn't exist to spoil my pleasure. And here is another. We accept that with a one-disc 9th we must put up with a turn-over in the middle of the slow movement, but at least side one can be rounded off with care, so that the disturbance is minimised. Here the tape is just sliced and the effect is dreadful.

If you don't think that will bother you, I can report that this is a good performance, though not quite a great one. Ansermet is clearly a devoted Beethoven conductor, giving us the music with the utmost care and skill, but he still does not get inside the music as some others do. His first movement is tremendously vital and full of thought, yet somehow it remains extrovert. The opening of the slow movement is comparatively prosaic; the strings play softly, but not with the rapt awe of a true *mezza voce* (Beethoven's direction). Ansermet does all the right things, he never puts a foot wrong, but somehow the sum total doesn't add up to an experience as great as we know this symphony can give, in spite of a particularly fine finale. The repeat of the second half of the Scherzo is, as often, not made but perhaps this is necessary in a one-disc version.

Readers will especially want to know about the vocal side of this production. Joan Sutherland and Norma Procter are marvellously good, and so is Dermota. Arnold van Mill sings well indeed, but I wish he wouldn't insert H's at times (*die-hse Töne* and *freu-heu-heu-den*) and he possibly tries to force too much expression into his opening recitative. Yet it's a superb voice and the quartet as a whole in the final, testing, *poco adagio* has never been bettered on records. The chorus is really good and is very well recorded.

The recording gives clear detail throughout and is well balanced. The separate double-bass line in the finale is really to be heard and all the forces in that movement are kept in perspective. It will be clear from all this that there is a very great deal to be said for this record, especially in view of its price.

Considering only other one-disc versions, I still think that Horenstein (Vox PL10000) gives the performance that grips me most and moves me most deeply, though the sound, while good, is not quite the equal of this more recent disc. I can do no more than suggest that you try them both—not forgetting to see what you think of Decca's break in the slow movement. T.H.

★BEETHOVEN. Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37. Rudolf Firkusny (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Walter Susskind.** Capitol Stereo SP8468 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: P8468 (10/59).

Rubinstein, New York S.A., Krips (1/58) SB2008
Solomon, Philh., Menges (3/59) BSD751
Katchen, L.S.O., Gamba (5/59) SXL2106

I wrote at some length about the mono version of this, and although the stereo is admirable, with clear separation and nicely ringing, crisp piano tone, I still feel it to be less gratifying in the long run than Solomon's 10-inch version, or Katchen's 12-inch with the attractive B flat rondo as fill-up. They are cheaper too. W.S.M.

★BEETHOVEN. Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73, "Emperor". Claudio Arrau (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Alceo Galliera.** Columbia Stereo SAX2297 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: 33CX1653 (10/59).

Gilels, Philh., Ludwig (10/58) SAX2252
Curzon, V.P.O., Knappertsbusch (10/58) SXL2002
Rubinstein, New York S.A., Krips (4/59) SB2015
Katz, Halle, Barbirolli (12/59) CSCL70019
Foldes, Berlin P.O., Leitner (12/59) SLPM138019

I found Arrau's record of the *Emperor* something of a disappointment when it first appeared, chiefly because it was not the equal of the unforgettable readings which I have heard two or three times from this most searching of Beethoven pianists. The vividness of stereo perhaps brings his view a step or so closer to the record collector's ear; at any rate I enjoyed it more this time, though the slow movement and parts of the finale still fall short of expectation, and there is no doubt that he is inadequately supported by his conductor. Of the stereo versions this is the most mature and revelatory; but it lacks the gleam of rediscovery and renewal as a whole. This is a quality which, in a less broad and questing view, is to be found in Mindru Katz's performance. And that also sounds very well in stereo. W.S.M.

BIZET. L'Arlésienne Suites Nos. 1 and 2.
CHABRIER. España. Marche Joyeuse. Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden, conducted by **Jean Morel.** R.C.A. Mono RB16175: ★Stereo SB2057 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Vigorous, straightforward performances of these *chevaux de bataille* (or French warhorses). We all know that the Covent Garden Orchestra can play very well indeed for conductors they like, and evidently they get on well with M. Morel. Those of us who have grown up with Beecham's interpretation of these pieces will perhaps have our reservations about one or two flaws of rhythm and balance, but these are only occasional. One more persistent fault that I do not think can be blamed entirely on the recording engineers is the absence of any real *pianissimo*. Taking one very striking example to stand for a rather large number, how about the end of the Prelude to *L'Arlésienne*, which is marked "*ppp smorzando*"—i.e., dying away from nearly nothing to absolutely nothing? It doesn't here. M. Morel is right, I am sure, to take the Minuet at a good, quick pace, as Bizet's *allegro giocoso* suggests; there's nothing of the eighteenth-century drawing-room about this minuet. In general his tempi strike me as judicious, if a little rigidly held; the occasional touches of deliberate rubato (as towards the end of *España*) are apt to sound uncomfortable. The recorded sound is bright and full in both mono and stereo versions. J.N.

★BIZET. Carmen Suite—excerpts.
★RAVEL. Bolero. Virtuoso Symphony of London conducted by **Alfred Wallenstein.** Audio Fidelity Stereo FCS50005 (12 in., 35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.).

Carmen excerpts: Toreador; Preludes to Acts 1 and 4; Prelude to Act 3; Prelude to Act 2; Children's Chorus; Danse Boheme.

There is no question about the outstandingly good sound of this Audio Fidelity stereo. At the very start of *Bolero*, for instance, you can just hear the *pp* pizzicato from the strings, where so often all you get is the flute tune and side-drum rhythm. All the softer passages on both sides are magically alive and it was only at the very end of *Bolero* that I found a certain amount of what, in my amateur way, I call "buzz round the ears"; and having written that, I already feel I have put it too strongly. In short, this is all undeniably astonishingly vivid. (And it is evident that the music has been balanced and controlled by someone

who really knows the scores and is intent on getting every detail on to the tape.)

Performances themselves are very good, yet it seems to me that only hi-fi addicts (or tycoons) will want to pay the considerably extra amount of money for such short sides. I don't doubt that wide groove spacing helps to give the superlative sound; but there are excellent versions of this music at normal prices and with a good deal more on the disc. Recommended, then, for those willing to pay for sound above everything.

T.H.

BRAHMS. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Charles Munch.** R.C.A. Mono RB16177: ★Stereo SB2060 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

This seems to be the first Brahms 4th in stereo, and since the orchestral sound is very rich, rather dark, and well balanced, it may be recommended to readers who won't have mono, and won't wait either.

My objection is that Munch, an able conductor who has given me some memorable musical experiences, doesn't set an inner pulse behind the music so that it flows irresistibly onward. The first movement sounds demure and has lost its drawing power half-way through the development; the beautiful second movement is overloaded with *ritenuti;* the finale gets slower and slower to the flute variation, after which there's no virtue in the strength of the last variations.

For mono collectors, Klemperer obviously, unless you are antipathetic, in which case try Kempe or Boult.

W.S.M.

★BRAHMS. Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15. Gary Graffman (piano), **Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Charles Munch.** R.C.A. Stereo SB2040 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Technically speaking, Gary Graffman gives a perfectly satisfactory account of this concerto (apart from over-pedalling the ferocious octave passages in the first movement); but it seems to me that he is insensitive to the deeper implications of the music. If the form of the work is entirely classical, the style is poetic-romantic; I admit that one can tire of the "profound" approach, particularly if the tempo is pulled all over the place in the interests of "interpretation", but surely a cold, super-classical rendering is not the answer. Its inadequacy may be felt from the start: after Munch has delivered the stormy opening with the maximum violence, Graffman's entry comes as an anti-climax. The flowing quaver figures are played with studious and meticulous accuracy, but where is the poetic sense of faint sorrow and disquiet that the great interpreters of this work bring out of the notes? Again, the broad F major melody and the opening theme of the *Adagio* are singularly lacking in warmth, and the *pianissimo* web of three-against-two figuration in the *Adagio* has not the necessary feeling of inward meditation. Munch brings much more intensity to the orchestral part throughout, and at times one has the impression of a mighty performance of a great concerto going on without the soloist being much involved in it.

The balance of piano and orchestra is absolutely right—entirely "concert-hall", as it must be for this work, in which the piano is so frequently part of the orchestra. At times, the piano even gets swamped, as it does in a live performance, and the result is admirably lifelike. Unfortunately, the quality and definition are not of the best; when the music gets at all loud, the middle texture is muddy (muddier than Brahms wrote it, that is), and the piano tone lacks brilliance. A top-boost helps, though it puts a steely edge on the violins at the same time. This first stereo issue will have superior rivals shortly, I imagine.

D.C.

BRAHMS. Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 83. Hans Richter-Haaser (piano), **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia Mono 33CX1680 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Backhaus, V.P.O., Schuricht (10/52) (R) LXT5305
Aeschbacher, Berlin P.O., Kempen (4/56) DGM18024
Uninsky, Hague P.O., Otterloo (9/57) SBL5208
Serkin, Philadelphia, Ormandy (12/57) ABL3170
Curzon, V.P.O., Knappertsbusch (7/58) LXT5434
Kentner, Philh., Boult (7/59) ALP1704
Ashkenazy, Berlin Opera Orch., Ludwig (4/59) 33CX1637
Gilels, Chicago S.O., Reiner (5/59) RB16142

I have rarely heard a concerto performance whose character was so clearly established by the conductor rather than the soloist. Of course the Brahms B flat has been described (though I forget just at the moment by whom) as "a symphony with piano obbligato". Texturally it may be, but the form of the work is such that its onward impetus must come equally from the pianist and the orchestra. Everything starts well. The horn-and-piano exchange is pensive but not at all sluggish; the entry of the woodwind instruments is carefully phrased, but still keeps the movement flowing, and when the piano replies with those left-hand arpeggios topped by two staccato octaves, we feel that Richter-Haaser has in fact got his teeth well into the music—all the more so because he is exceptionally well recorded in relation to the orchestra. My first twinge of doubt came at bar 20, where he makes an unmarked (and musically unnecessary) relaxation of tempo and dynamics for a moment; clearly he belongs to the school who feel that there is room for the occasional pensive inflection in the middle of an allegro, which can be dangerous. But it was only during the first tutti that I began to get an inkling of the total character of this performance. Karajan seems quite unable to resist the markings *espressivo* and *dolce.* Why should he, you ask, if they are in the score? Yes, but it is the means he adopts to achieve "expressiveness" and "sweetness" that I find so distressing, and so out of character with the work as a whole. Each time we get an easing of the tempo and a clinging phrasing that would not come amiss from a 'pop' orchestra. I really do not think that it is engrained puritanism on my part that makes me object to the voluptuous way in which these passages are taken. By all means let the strings play with as warm a sound as they can, but not at the expense of the movement's onward drive.

The first crucial instance of this comes with the string interjections between bars 87 and 113 of the first movement, but there are so many more throughout the work that I eventually stopped noting them down as I listened. Sometimes they hardly matter; at other times they are infuriating, as when the orchestra simply fails to *launch* the piano on its solo at bar 125 of the same movement. I did think for a while that this might be a deliberate attempt to increase the contrast between the opening allegro and the scherzo which follows it—sometimes they can seem a little too similar; but no, the interpretation of the scherzo in this performance is all of a piece with the rest.

Let me not for one moment give the impression that the concerto is not well played technically. Richter-Haaser does not give the impression of being so much on top of the notes that he can afford to take liberties, but this thoroughly sound and sober approach I find more sympathetic (in this work) than the rather too frank virtuosity that Gilels brings to it. And the orchestra play superbly, within the limitations of Karajan's interpretation—in other words their tone is magnificent, but their rhythm tends to become slack; several entries are a fraction late, and accents (for example the *sfp*'s in bars 51 and 52 of the slow movement) tend to be pulled in the same way that punches can be.

The quality of the piano tone and its relation to the orchestra is excellent; the sound of the orchestra itself very good in a fairly reverberent way. My only reservation concerns the spotlighting of the solo 'cello in the slow movement, which may be reduced in the stereo version, which is scheduled to follow on SAX2328. I cannot pretend that I myself would have any hesitation in preferring the Serkin version which A.P. praised so highly when it was first issued; it seems to me an outstandingly sane and virile reading. But I am well aware that others take a different view of this concerto, and if they find that their view coincides with that of Karajan, they need have no qualms about the quality of the recording as such.

J.N.

★BRAHMS. Variations on a Theme of Haydn, Op. 56a, "St. Anthony Chorale". Academic Festival Overture, Op. 60. Tragic Overture, Op. 81. Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by **Eduard van Beinum.** Philips Stereo SABL131 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

St. Anthony Chorale:
L.S.O., Dorati (12/59) AMS16006

Musical, thoughtful, performances, but it is difficult to judge their real impact because the recording itself is so withdrawn. It is beautifully clear stereo and the sound is always lovely, but climaxes never come at you and knock you down, a serious defect in Brahms.

Setting that aside, as far as one can, van Beinum's performance of the *Tragic Overture* is the most impressive thing on the record; a satisfying basic speed that keeps the music flowing and at the same time allows it



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power, while the middle section is now taken at something more like the speed Brahms indicated. (In his earlier recording van Beinum, almost incredibly, took no notice of Brahms' perfectly clear direction and played the music at double speed.)

The *St. Anthony Variations* are sensitively done (and I particularly appreciated the grace of Variation 7, which so easily sounds bumpy). A good *Academic Festival Overture*, too—but what is this without a real blaze of sound at the end? The Concertgebouw Orchestra plays with exceptional beauty throughout.

Choice between the two rival stereo records of the variations is difficult. While I suspect that van Beinum's was slightly the finer performance, Dorati's recording gives us climaxes all right. On the other hand, many will prefer the overtures as a coupling to the *Hungarian Dances* of the Dorati record.

Sides, by the way, are not particularly generous in length for a fully priced record. The overtures together add up to less than 24 minutes, while the variations are less than 17. T.H.

BRUCKNER. Symphony No. 3 in D minor. Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Volkmar Andreae.** Philips Mono A00273L (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Available to special order only.

V.P.O., Knappertsbusch (12/54) LXT2967

A whole Bruckner symphony on one LP disc is a bargain at any time, but I doubt whether the newcomer should begin with No. 3, especially since Bruckner's own version of the work is not used on either of the two recordings now available. If he is after a reasonably priced Bruckner record, there is always No. 4 (Vox PL11200) or No. 9 (Vox PL8040), both of which use the original score.

It's true that Wagner, when Bruckner showed him the scores of his first three symphonies, declared himself mightily impressed by No. 3 (no doubt on account of the opening string murmurings and the stark trumpet theme); but one can imagine that he would have been even more enthusiastic about the last three symphonies had he lived to make their acquaintance. In No. 3, as always in Bruckner, the *Adagio* is a thing of heartfelt beauty and the *Scherzo* is vastly exciting, but the two outer movements, despite their splendid material, have certain formal deficiences—particularly the finale, in which the introduction of new themes at bars 167 and 330 seems quite unmotivated. Unfortunately, these defects are accentuated and added to in the edition used—the modified and cut version published in 1890, which was produced by Bruckner under the influence of Joseph Schalk and further "edited" by Schalk himself. Now that Bruckner's own definitive version of 1878 is available in the Bruckner Society Edition, there is no excuse for using Schalk's score any more. If anyone wishes to know what kind of differences there are, a glance at figure 159 of the first movement will give an idea: the sudden stoppage of the flow for a grandiloquent gesture is meaningless from any point of view; in the proper version, the music goes on boiling up at this point, working up naturally to the climax twelve bars later. And a study of the finale in the two versions reveals that the 1890 score badly mutilates a noble if faulty structure.

The new recording is far more satisfying than the old, as an interpretation of the music. Knappertsbusch's tempi for the *andante* section of the *Adagio*, the trio of the *Scherzo*, and the second subject of the finale are ridiculously slow. The last is so slow, in fact, as to ruin the character of the music; one can only suppose that Knappertsbusch's reverence for the composer is so great that he cannot believe him guilty of writing a polka as a counter-melody to a chorale—which is exactly what Bruckner has done at this point, as he himself admitted. In all these places, Andreae keeps the music moving easily, and the gain in vitality and structural sense is immeasurable. The Vienna Symphony Orchestra does not play as beautifully as the Vienna Philharmonic, but the Philips recording is appreciably clearer, notably in its presentation of the string polka and brass chorale in harness. The real snag, however, is that Andreae misses the drama of the first movement, owing to over-attention to detail, and his main tempo for the finale is too hasty to bring out the majesty of the music. Neither of these performances is comparable with the gripping one Horenstein gave on the Third Programme eighteen months ago—in the original version. D.C.

CHOPIN. Les Sylphides—complete (arr. Jacob).
MEYERBEER. Les Patineurs—excerpts (arr. Lambert).
PONCHIELLI. La Gioconda: Dance of the Hours. **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Charles Mackerras.** Columbia Mono 33SX1207 (12 in., 25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.).

Les Patineurs excerpts: Entre; Pas seul; Pas de deux; Ensemble; Pas de trois.

E.M.I. are presumably expecting a really tremendous demand for recordings of *Les Sylphides* this winter, for they have actually issued two in three months, both played by the Philharmonia Orchestra. Fresh (comparatively) from listening to Robert Irving's views on this rose-petalled music, I faced Mackerras's with a certain lethargy. However, there are no signs of lethargy in his recording. This is a surprisingly vital performance. Whether dancers could ever keep up with the brisk tempo o the Nocturne at its climax I very much doubt, and for the listener I suppose this does not much matter. It certainly sweeps you along in your armchair. But it may be that you are hearing it one shade faster than the conductor expected, for the opening prelude and nocturne both sound in A major instead of the usual A flat. Thereafter the pitch is conventional. Though less languid than Irving, Mackerras finds plenty of poetry in the music, and he achieves a degree of rubato in some pieces, notably the C sharp minor waltz, that one can normally expect only from pianists. In fact I preferred this version, if only for its freshness and unexpectedness.

The five pieces from *Les Patineurs* on the other side are from the same recording I reviewed in November on SED5563. They, too, receive a vivid performance and are well recorded. The whole 12-inch LP has been advised for release in stereo on SCX3291. R.F.

★COPLAND. El Salón México. Danzon Cubano. Rodeo. Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Mercury Stereo AMS16021 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). Mono: MMA11005 (2/59).

The mono version of this record was so clear that the gain from having it in stereo is perhaps less than usual. Nevertheless the sounds do separate out even more remarkably, allowing one to hear a quite exceptional amount of the details of Copland's scoring and of the Minneapolis Orchestra's performance. A very fine performance, too, as M.M. remarked when he reviewed the earlier version a year ago, though I feel bound to agree with him about the lack of rhythmic relaxation. Dorati is wonderful at steering an orchestra through the rhythmic complexities of Stravinsky or Bartók, but I am inclined to think that Copland's syncopations (in spite of his immense debt to Stravinsky) stem even more from the popular styles of North and South America—particularly in the pieces on this record. I suspect that the dancing of Mexican and Cuban peasants, and even cowboys if they still have a style of their own, is a little more loose-limbed than these performances would suggest. But this is perhaps a carping criticism, and it certainly doesn't apply throughout; there could hardly be anything more relaxed than that trombone passage towards the end of the *Danzon*.

Incidentally, I wonder whether Dorati is right in taking Copland's "gourd" (among the percussion of *El Salón México*) to mean a *tapped* hollow gourd. It sounds too much like the wood block and the Chinese blocks which also occur in the score, and I would have thought maracas (gourds half-filled with dry seeds or something of that kind) were more appropriate; that is what Bernstein used on his earlier version, now unfortunately deleted. J.N.

★DEBUSSY. Marche Ecossaise. Berceuse héroïque.
★RAVEL. Bolero. La Valse. Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by **Eduard van Beinum.** Philips Stereo SABL130 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Constant readers may have noticed that I have forsaken most of the Beethoven symphonies I used regularly to review. This is at my own request, not because I had got tired of Beethoven, but because I found the endless stream of mostly mediocre performances hard to bear any longer. In exchange I seem to have got Ravel's *Bolero*—three versions this month alone—which is out of the frying-pan into the fire indeed!

However, this is a good one, very effectively controlled (which a crescendo of such size needs) and all produced in first-class sound. The earlier solo instruments are rather prim in dealing with those

upward grace-notes in the tune. In fact, there are naughtier versions of the piece—but still probably none better played.

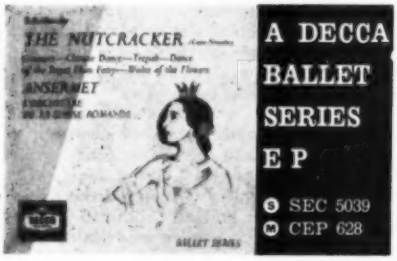
It's a bit the same with *La Valse*. Personally I like the glissandi from the violas in the tune at the start to be more evident, for one thing. But the virtues of this performance heavily outweigh any such reservations. It is never "hammed", as performances of this work sometimes are. The first violin tune really does start *pp* and is kept so, instead of being turned into something luscious. There is imagination here and sensitiveness to the poetry of Ravel's score. Yet every moment has vitality and though there may be more sheerly sensuous versions, this is still a beautifully judged one. The playing is again as good as one expects from the Concertgebouw Orchestra, so much so that I suspect two momentary lapses of tuning to be possibly due to the recording.

With these Ravel warhorses go two rare Debussy items. The sleeve note is entertaining and stimulating (I wonder who wrote it) and it saved my hunting up the origins of these pieces. The *Marche Ecossaise* is founded on an old Scottish song called the *Earl of Ross March* and was conceived as a piano duet and later orchestrated by the composer. It dates from 1891. The *Berceuse* also began as a piano piece, composed in 1914 and dedicated to King Albert of the Belgians and his soldiers. It's an odd little thing, ending almost as if Debussy had forgotten to finish it off properly.

These fill-ups add interest to highly musical interpretations and excellent recording of the Ravel works and I enjoyed the assortment very much. T.H.

DUKAS. L'Apprenti Sorcier.
RAVEL. Bolero. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Hugo Rignold.** Pye Mono GGL0032 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.). ★Stereo GSGL10032 (12 in., 20s. 9d. plus 6s. 9d. P.T.).

These are easy-going performances, well played if you like them that way. (I wonder if Hugo Rignold knows that when Dukas first showed the score to Toscanini, the maestro, seeing the metronome mark for the main part of the work, said, "That's an impossibly fast speed". Whereupon Dukas altered it to the present, very leisurely 116. Toscanini then said, "But now it's far too slow!" Some composers are extremely bad at setting speeds for their own music and the story seems to make it clear that Dukas did want the piece to go very quickly. Both Toscanini and Cantelli recorded it that way.)



The sound of the stereo is bright and good (I have not heard the mono so far), but as a recording it lacks care and real range of sound. The start of the broomstick's twitching into activity is far too loud (in case the innocent listener misses it?) and so it is again when the broomstick is broken in two. And it is careless to leave an empty pause bar before the first *vif*, when the violas and 'cellos should carry on after the violins have stopped.

I have the feeling that this is thought good enough for a cheaply-priced record. (I hesitate to say a bargain record, when the *Bolero* lasts less than a quarter of an hour and *L'Apprenti Sorcier* only about 11 minutes. The 12-inch disc for a guinea—mono—looks less impressive when you think of this.)

The sleeve note should at least get its facts right and so not positively mislead the kind of inexperienced listener at whom the disc is presumably aimed. The tone is magisterial, but that apart, of the Dukas work I read "Heed the appearance of the magician, for example, introduced by three bassoons", and "at the end, listen carefully to the three startling chords. . . ." T.H.

DVORAK. 'Cello Concerto in B minor, Op. 104. Ludwig Hoelscher ('cello), **Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Joseph Keilberth.** Telefunken Mono GMA9: ★Stereo SMA9 (12 in., 19s. 9½d. plus 6s. 5d. P.T.).
Stereo:
Starker, Philh., Susskind (1/59) SAX2263

The pleasure that Dvořák's 'Cello Concerto provides is due at least as much to the wonderful orchestral writing as to the solo 'cello part. Alas, on the stereo version of the new Telefunken recording the accompaniment is often inaudible. The woodwind sound as though they were in the next room, and often they cannot be heard at all. On the other hand the 'cello itself booms out like a foghorn all through, smothering detail after detail. Bar 43 of the slow movement and the bars that follow give us the 'cello solo of all time; counter-subjects on first violins and clarinet simply are not to be heard. I could list a hundred or so delightful touches of orchestration that go for nothing. Also bars 477-8 in the finale have got cut out in the editing. No question of it, if you must have a stereo disc of this concerto, the Starker is the one; it's slightly better played and incomparably better balanced.

On the other hand the mono version of the new Telefunken recording is rather good. The balance is utterly different, and most of the details that cannot be heard on its twin brother are perfectly clear here; including bars 477-8 in the finale. I still cannot quite hear the clarinet in bar 107 of the slow movement, the muted trumpets in bar 450 of the finale and one or two other entries that come through nicely on the Starker. Nevertheless, this is after all a much cheaper record, and the orchestral playing is excellent and the 'cello playing warm and thoughtful. A few passages defeat Mr. Hoelscher and no wonder, but on the whole I would say that the mono version of this concerto is good value for money. R.F.

DVORAK. Serenade in E major for Strings, Op. 22. Prague Soloists' Orchestra conducted by **Vaclav Talich. Serenade in D minor, Op. 44. Chamber Ensemble of the Prague Conservatoire.** Supraphon Mono LPV410 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).
Serenade in E major:
Bamberg S.O., Lehmann (2/57) DGM18337
Israel P.O., Kubelik (6/58) LW5332
Serenade in D minor:
London Baroque Ensemble, Haas (10/52) PMB1001
Halle, Barbirolli (7/59) CCL30153

Of the two recordings now issued together on this disc one will already be familiar to some readers. The E major serenade first appeared in this country back in 1952 on 78s, and in the following year in a transfer to LP (LPM32). A.R. commented on the dryness of the string tone at the time, and although it may have been improved a little since then I still find it rather ungrateful; it sounds to me as though a good deal of the original "top" has been cut to remove surface-hiss, and the treble then artificially boosted. This is an amiable, repetitive work that needs to be listened to without distractions of this kind, and on the whole I think I should feel inclined to recommend the recording made by Rafael Kubelik and the Israel Philharmonic strings—even though the Israeli players may sound a little too glamorous for this domestic music.

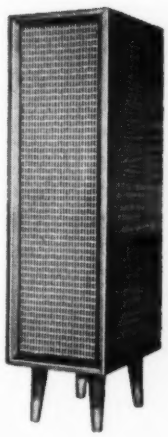
The D minor serenade for woodwind, 'cello and bass was written in 1878, only three years later than the E major serenade for strings, but without being any less charming it is a far more mature and individual work. The Chamber Ensemble of the Prague Conservatoire are particularly successful in catching the rustic flavour that runs throughout the work. This is partly a matter of the tone-qualities they cultivate (particularly the oboes), and partly a matter of style. Yet I have the feeling that their approach is sometimes just a little too forthright and uncomplicated. While the opening march and the final movement in polka-time come off splendidly, the slow movement surely needs more of the poetry than can be found in either of the rival versions. I suspect that this may be something to do with the presence or absence of a conductor, for the early bars of this movement do seem to call for a controlling hand if they are to sound relaxed without losing their forward momentum.

The recording of the D minor serenade on this new disc is quite unexceptionable, though some people may find it a little close for such outdoor scoring. Barbirolli's version is even better recorded, but I found his account of the second movement and its helter-skelter trio unbearably sentimental; his version brings the piece all too firmly into the drawing-room. On the old record made by the London Baroque Ensemble it is the finale that is the weak spot—rushed almost beyond recognition—yet I think on balance that it would remain my first choice. However the new Supraphon disc can certainly be recommended as the cheapest and most convenient way of making the acquaintance of two charming pieces of entertainment music. J.N.



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ELGAR. Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36, "Enigma".
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Sir Malcolm Sargent.** H.M.V. Mono XLP20007 (12 in., 16s. 11½d. plus 5s. 6½d. P.T.). Recorded in St. Augustine's Church, St. John's Wood, London.

The great advantage of this disc is that it offers two of the best-loved English works of modern times at a low cost; the only other identical coupling (Capitol P8383) is almost double the price, and the conductor, William Steinberg, is out of touch with the style of the music, as R.F. said in his review. On the other hand, the Capitol has each work on a side to itself, whereas the present issue obliges one to turn over for the finale of the *Enigma Variations*.

Sir Malcolm Sargent's interpretations will be familiar to Prom enthusiasts, and he secures excellent realisations of them from the Philharmonia Orchestra. I personally cannot agree with everything that he does. He seems to me to "overdo" *Enigma* by exaggerating the tempi: some of the slow ones (the theme and Vars. 1 and 8) are too slow; some of the quick ones (Vars. 3, 7 and 11) too quick. And in the *Tallis Fantasia* I find an undue intensity and too much string vibrato in places, which seems out of keeping with the meditative nature of the music (I used as comparison the first-ever recording—by Boyd Neel on Decca 78 r.p.m.—which was supervised by the composer). For my part, I prefer Sir Adrian Boult's interpretations of both works, and Sir Thomas Beecham's of *Enigma;* but I am sure that this record will give a great deal of pleasure to many people.

The recordings are admirably full-bodied, clear, and well-balanced, though the church acoustic suits the Vaughan Williams work much better than the Elgar (quick passages are a little blurred, and the opening timpani solo of Var. 7 inevitably lacks definition). D.C.

FOERSTER. From Shakespeare—Orchestral Suite, Op. 76. **Jiri Bezdekovsky** (violin), **Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Vaclav Jiracek.** Supraphon Mono LPM383 (10 in., 14s. 9d. plus 4s. 9d. P.T.).

Josef Bohuslav Foerster was a Czech contemporary of Elgar and Richard Strauss, and like those two composers, took a great interest in the musical delineation of character: his orchestral suite, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, was highly commended by A.P. in a recent review. I have heard the work, and cannot claim to enjoy it half as much as A.P. did, so if I am cool about this Shakespeare Suite, you are at liberty to regard my attitude to Foerster as a lack of personal sympathy—he might well be worth a try.

The style is a modest sort of late romanticism, pleasantly tuneful, quietly genial and reflective by turns, but with none of the strong individuality or subtle feeling for character that one finds in *Falstaff* or *Don Quixote*. The movements of the suite are labelled *Perdita, Viola, Lady Macbeth,* and *Katharina and Petruchio,* but I defy anyone to find more than the remotest connection between the music and the personages represented. The first two pieces have a kind of guileless feminine charm, and the last is appropriately lively, but Lady Macbeth is very tepidly portrayed. One wonders why Foerster chose this character, since, as the sleeve-note says, he was deeply religious to the point of believing that music was incapable of expressing evil in any shape or form; the lady sounds merely a bad case of melancholia.

The performance may have something to do with my reaction, for it does not even make the most of what few opportunities the music provides, particularly in the occasional passionate moments; the recording is rather constricted and the surface of my copy has a noticeable swish in the *Perdita* movement. D.C.

GLUCK. Sinfonia in G major. Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by **Igor Markevitch.**
MOZART. March No. 2 in D major, K.335†. Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra conducted by **Ernst Märzendorfer.** D.G.G. Mono EPL30504 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Item marked † previously available on DGM18297 (3/57).

Last month D.G.G. issued the first of Mozart's two marches, K.335, coupled with some of his dance-music; both items had previously been available in twelve-inch format. This time instead of dances we are given a piece by Gluck which seems not to be otherwise available—one of the eleven "sinfonias" or "overtures", most of which remain unpublished. It is an attractive work in the customary three sections of the Italian operatic overture of the time—two quick ones on either side of a slow middle one, which in this performance is taken just a shade too langorously for my taste. A pleasant coupling, all the same, and recommended to anyone who enjoys the byways of eighteenth-century music. J.N.

★GRIEG. Symphonic Dances, Op. 64—complete. **Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34. Vienna Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Eduard van Remoortel.** Vox Stereo STPL510330 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono PL10330 (8/58).

I thought the mono version of this record a collection of agreeable music, attractively played and well recorded. The arrival of the stereo disc doesn't make me want to change my allegiance. It has the extra clarity that stereo always brings, but I regret a loss of fullness of sound. A good deal of music has disappeared—a suite from *Sigurd Jorsalfar*—and even if you should prefer the stereo sound, you may well not think it worth the loss of about 14 minutes of music. After all, this is not great music; one wants as much of it as possible on a record, adequately recorded, and this the mono disc provides.

In addition, the last chord of the third *Symphonic Dance* is disgracefully truncated, which it is not on the mono record. Not only is the resonance cut off abruptly but I'm not sure that a bit of the chord itself hasn't been lost. (Yet Vox include a slip with the record saying that it has been individually inspected "to assure you a perfect product even more nearly perfect than our monophonic records"; these curious degrees of perfection may apply to the actual disc, but evidently not to the care with which it was produced.)

If you want some attractive Grieg, go for the mono record. T.H.

GRIEG. (*a*) **Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16.**
FRANCK. (*b*) **Symphonic Variations.**
LITOLFF. (*c*) **Concerto Symphonique:** Scherzo only. **Clifford Curzon** (piano) with (*a*) **London Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Olvin Fjeldstad** and (*b*) and (*c*) **London Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Adrian Boult.** Decca Mono LXT5547: ★Stereo SXL2173 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Grieg Piano Concerto, Stereo:
Solomon, Philh., Menges (7/59) ASD272
Cziffra, Philh., Vandernoot (12/59) ASD301

Franck Symphonic Variations, Stereo:
Rubinstein, New York S.O., Wallenstein (5/59) SB2023
Frugoni, Vienna Volksoper, Gielen (12/59) STPL511220

I was hauled over the coals by several people for revolting against György Cziffra's beady-eyed rediscovery of Grieg's piano concerto. It was the heavily fragrant stereo that disturbed me more than its more sober mono original, but after hearing both several times, and now the stereo version again, I remain sure that it's a wrong-headed performance, because it seeks to drag into the work what isn't fundamentally there. I conceive Grieg's concerto as something more lyrical and deep-searching than a frisky warhorse. One can regard it indeed as orchestral chamber music, so often is the soloist playing with or under other members of the orchestra—and Grieg himself wrote of creating happy homes where other composers erected temples on the heights. But there is a big view to be taken of this concerto, so long as the scale is right. I have heard Cherkassky play it big, with such love that he convinced me against my will; I have heard Arrau and also Robert Riefling play big in the climaxes and intimate in the lyrical music, and unify both aspects. Clifford Curzon does the same, and his is a supremely successful version of the concerto because everything that he does is perfectly natural, and perfectly musicianly. He imports nothing



from outside, but shows the meaning and glory of what Grieg actually created. Comparing these two performances, you can say that both are examples of masterly pianism, Curzon's not less than that of the deservedly admired Cziffra; but where Cziffra orders us to admire his loot, Curzon discreetly pulls hidden treasure out of his pocket. And there's the difference.

Curzon isn't too proud to serve as the orchestra's accompanist; he doesn't seek to steal the flute's limelight in the middle section of the first movement. His thesis all the time consists of the rhythmic life of the music, and its harmonic train of thought, the means whereby a movement gets from A to Z. "In the beginning", said (I think) Bülow, "was rhythm". Curzon's playing on this disc proves the proposition; every great performer does. In Grieg's concerto he has the benefit of a Norwegian conductor who knows instinctively about the lilt in Grieg's music, and who dwells just enough on each important moment. Together with the L.S.O., they make this concerto fresh again without ever striving after effect. There is nothing tarty about the stereo sound; it is just clear and vivid and beautiful—and the piano tone is even more lively than that of Cziffra's disc.

Sir Adrian Boult takes over the accompaniment, or whatever it should be called, on the second side. Franck's variations are concertante, too, rather than virtuoso (the trickiest piano passages are not the most dazzling). Their performance is perceptive, and decidedly more satisfactory than the other two listed above (yes, including Rubinstein's), but not ideal; some of it is too deliberate, veering towards primness. Litolff's jolly scherzo is given a gleaming, very masculine performance, not at all like Scharrer or Lympany. Curzon brings out the Gallic efficiency and chic of the music, and when, for a moment, the pert chirrupping grows more gentle, his piano entry is very subtly graded into a more sober gambol. The mono disc is still very clear, but slightly less brilliant. This seems to be Curzon at his best, and it is certainly one of the most desirable versions of Grieg's lovely concerto. W.S.M.

LALO. Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21. TCHAIKOVSKY. Sérénade Mélancolique, Op. 26. Leonid Kogan (violin), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Kyril Kondrashin.** Columbia Mono 33CX1683 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Reviewing Leonid Kogan's 10-inch disc of the Lalo (a different performance with Charles Bruck conducting—Col. 33C1059), T.H. described the violin playing as superb, but deplored Kogan's lack of regard for the work's Spanish rhythms and melodic accentuation. I have not heard this record, but the same criticism certainly applies to the present one: the playing is as accurate, virtuosic, and sensitive as I have heard, but the slow *habanera* quaver triplets, the grace-notes and the quick Spanish semiquaver triplets go for nothing. Isaac Stern's handling of these elements (on Philips ABL3168—with the Bruch Concerto as coupling) is masterly, and his virtuosity is only a shade less than Kogan's, not being quite as effortless.

T.H. also compared the balance of the Columbia 10-inch disc with that of the Philips, saying that he wearied of so much close-up violin tone; but in the present case, the boot is on the other foot. It is the Philips that wearies me by the relentless proximity of the soloist, whereas the new Columbia is, I would say, the perfect balance: the violin is just to the fore, but in the quiet passages it is sufficiently distant to render Kogan's exquisite *piano* and *pianissimo* faithfully, and hardly a note of the orchestral part is lost. If you are not too worried by the lack of Spanish style, this record is a winner, especially as the performance of Tchaikovsky's haunting *Sérénade Mélancolique* is absolutely superb. D.C.

LISZT. Faust Symphony, G.108. Mephisto Waltz, G.111. WAGNER. A Faust Overture. Ferdinand Koch (tenor), **Südwestfunk Symphony Orchestra and Chorus** conducted by **Jascha Horenstein.** Vox Mono PL10902 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.).

LISZT. Faust Symphony, G.108. Orpheus – Symphonic Poem, G.98. Alexander Young (tenor), **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** and **Beecham Choral Society** conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart., C.H.** H.M.V. Mono ALP1737-8: ★Stereo ASD317-8 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.).

Faust Symphony, Mono: Paris Cons., Argenta (6/56) LXT5101-2
Orpheus, Mono: London Philharmonic S.O., Dixon (7/54) NLP912

The *Faust Symphony* is one of Liszt's very finest works, and is only denied its rightful place in the normal concert repertoire by the dictates of musical fashion. Its neglect not only robs us of the enjoyment of a romantic masterpiece, but creates a gap in our understanding of musical history, since it was from the Liszt of the *Faust Symphony* and the symphonic poems that Wagner derived a considerable part of his later melodic, harmonic and orchestral style (from *The Valkyrie* onwards). And if we have to admit that Wagner put these techniques to much greater use, we should not deny that, in the hands of the man who originally conceived them, they produced music of extraordinary beauty and originality.

The symphony consists of three movements—three "character-portraits", Liszt called them: Faust, Gretchen and Mephistopheles. At the end of the final movement, the Prince of Darkness recedes, to give way to a religious apotheosis—a setting of the final lines of Goethe's great Faust drama, lines which sum up the striving of man's spirit for union with the divine. The work is, in fact, a portrait of Liszt himself, reflecting through a dramatic prism various aspects of his own character: there was much of Faust in his turbulent nature, more of Mephistopheles; he was a great lover, and a great seeker for religious assurance. The expression of these qualities is remarkably compelling, especially in its sense of mystery and magic; if there is a occasional vulgarity in the *Faust* movement and a slight sentimentality in the portrayal of Gretchen, the picture of Mephistopheles is brilliant in its wit, derision and malice (especially in the near-Stravinskyan fugue). The same themes are used throughout, superbly transformed into new shapes all the time, and there are only two real blots on the score: the would-be "noble" trumpet theme (*Faust*, letter O), which rivals its equivalent in Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration* for spiritual emptiness, and the choral apotheosis, which is religiose rather than religious.

The old Decca recording was unsatisfactory for four reasons—the less than outstanding performance, the too-near recording, the turn-over in the first movement, and the omission of the choral ending (the alternative brief orchestral coda was used). Both the new versions use the choral ending and avoid a turn-over, and both are outstanding interpretations. But I feel I should say straightaway that Horenstein is as badly served by his recording as Beecham is superbly by his, since this factor has a decisive influence on one's assessment of the performances. The Vox disc throws the sound at you all the time, which means that the *furioso* violin passages in *Faust*, after letter G, for example, sound far more terrific than on the Columbia; but, on the other hand, the *piano* and *pianissimo* chamber-scoring in *Gretchen* sounds loud and coarse, whereas on the H.M.V. it sounds quiet and refined, as it should. There is no doubt which is the better recording—the H.M.V.—but it is difficult to tell which is the most satisfying performance. We have two different conceptions, and the difference between them is exaggerated out of all proportion by the inadequacy of the Vox engineering.

Horenstein brings a Wagnerian weight and breadth to the music, but also a tremendous drive which, in *Mephistopheles*, is quite awe-inspiring. In the demonic passages in the outer two movements, he is much more savage than Beecham, and realises more fully the tragic power of the score; but in *Gretchen*, he seems far too heavy-handed (at least, as recorded). On the other hand, Beecham, lacking nothing of drive and excitement, is more sensitive in his shaping of the lyrical passages—superbly so in fact (need I say?)—and especially in *Gretchen;* in this, he is backed up by some most beautiful solo wind and viola playing. Against this, one has to set the fact that Beecham takes *Gretchen* at an *adagio* (in places *molto adagio*), whereas Horenstein follows Liszt's marking—*Andante;* but I feel that the liberty is amply justified by the exquisite result. Beecham's *Mephistopheles* is utterly different from Horenstein's, but equally fascinating: this is not the brutal, ferocious enemy of the divine, but the cynical, quick-witted, feather-in-cap spirit, laughing sardonically at everything under the sun. Both conceptions, mutually exclusive, are brought off with absolute mastery. In the apotheosis, Horenstein is solemn and Germanic, and rightly so, I feel: he presents the music as Liszt must surely have imagined it, and if it



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sounds extremely portentous, that is an inherent quality of the score at this point. Music concerned with religion never brings out the best in Sir Thomas, and although he secures a splendid performance of the music *qua* music, he shows a certain lack of depth in his approach. But his chorus is much more sensitive to dynamics and diction; and Alexander Young sings the "Ewigweibliche" passages as they are marked (*p*, *dolce*, *smorzando*), whereas Ferdinand Koch bellows them like a *heldentenor* (once more, the recording emphasises the fault).

Summing up, Beecham gives one of his superlative performances, but some Liszt-lovers may well prefer Horenstein's more titanic interpretation, if they are prepared to do their own balance by continually adjusting the volume control. As regards the fill-ups (an irrelevant consideration, I would say), Beecham's enchanting *Orpheus* outclasses Dean Dixon's adequate performance on NLP912; Horenstein's *Faust Overture*, the only one now available, is strangely lacking in breadth and is not well played by the orchestra; and his *Mephisto Waltz* is unduly heavy in places (again, in both cases, the recording is coarse). I have not yet heard the Beecham stereo pressings.

D.C.

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Halle, Barbirolli	(9/57) CCL30117
N.Y.S.O., Walter	(7/55) (2/59)ABL3222

Mahler's First Symphony would seem to be a conductor's favourite: eight LP versions have appeared since the war, of which only six are now available. It's a favourite of mine, too, for despite its faults, it's a most lovable work; but so many recordings of it seem beside the point, while neither the Third or the Seventh is in the catalogue. Sir Adrian Boult, whom one would hardly cast as a Mahler conductor, gives an extremely vital account of the work, but one that can only be described as unidiomatic. His gearing of the tempi in the first movement is masterly, but it involves him in a driving *allegro* at figure 18 which can hardly be called *gemächlich* (easy-going). The tempo of the *Scherzo* is surely far too quick; what Mahler meant by the single word *kräftig* (forcefully) may be open to dispute, but the movement is a *Ländler*, and the essence of this dance is a rather heavy lilt (used by all the other conductors except, strangely enough, Bruno Walter, who has greatly increased the tempo since I heard him in, I think, 1950. Even so, Walter is still steadier than Boult). The consequence of Boult's quick tempo is that the trio has to be hurried along so quickly that there is no time for the proper phrasing of its seductive waltz-tunes (the marking here is *recht gemächlich*—"really easy-going"). Nor is the Funeral March taken quite slowly enough, I would say, to fit the marking *gemessen* (measured). The finale is tremendously exciting, but again there is a tendency to drive ahead all the time, without regard to the markings, and the D flat second subject is wanting in passion.

All the other recorded versions are more truly Mahlerian, but Kletzki is rather idiosyncratic and Kubelik is often over-pathetic, missing much of the irony of the work. Barbirolli, it seems to me, is too self-consciously aiming at the Mahler idiom, being over-meticulous with the accent in the *Scherzo* and the opening of the finale, and over-sentimental in the more gently romantic parts of the score. All these three are too dimly recorded to be recommended. The choice lies, I would say, between Bruno Walter and Horenstein (both finely recorded): each has the genuine Mahler style, and if Horenstein's weightier treatment of the *Scherzo* is more successful, Bruno Walter's orthodox handling of the finale's fanfare climaxes is preferable to Horenstein's rhetorical broadening out (less than half the speed the second time—the marking is only *ritardando*). If I were buying a record of this work, I would choose Bruno Walter.

D.C.

MENDELSSOHN. (*a*) **Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56, "Scotch".** (*b*) **A Midsummer Night's Dream:** Overture, Op. 21; Scherzo, Op. 61, No. 1; Wedding March, Op. 61, No. 9. (*a*) **Südwestfunk Orchestra** and (*b*) **Vienna Volksoper Orchestra,** both conducted by **Eduard von Remoortel.** Vox Mono PL11310 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Vox's earlier record of the *Scotch* was one of the best; the conductor was Klemperer, and the disc is still available. But the sound of it has dated, and Klemperer has joined another firm. The new one doesn't maintain the same distinction. It is not the interpretation of the music but the execution that sets it below the top of the class. Remoortel has the right fresh approach to Mendelssohn, an approach that doesn't eschew sentiment, but keeps it in its place. Neither orchestra plays really well for him; the ensemble often gets out of joint (only just, but enough to be noticeable), and although he infuses good lilt into the movements, his rhythm isn't precise enough. For example, the Allegro of the first movement of the *Scotch* starts very well, really soft and with a nice spring to the first subject; but by the time the bridge passage is reached, the pulse has faltered and the rhythmic impetus has been broken, and when the clarinet enters with the second subject the event is not signalled pointfully; the tune just appears, and not quite in gear either. This let-down process happens again and again, so that eventually the symphony turns out to have been a blurred experience, moments of charm and exhilaration emerging from stretches of stodge or blancmange.

In the *Dream* music Remoortel takes the March fast, and rather hurries the development section of the overture; the scherzo is not quite steady in pace. The sound, with this orchestra, is thin and a bit hard, that of the Baden orchestra quite euphonious. But neither orchestra plays as an ideally responsive instrument, and since I have heard some good playing from the latter, I am inclined to lay some blame on the conductor. If you want a *Scotch* Symphony now, I very much like Boult (with *Italian*) on Nixa. The Kletzki Columbia, which A.P. used to prefer, is being deleted, I had better remind you.

W.S.M.

MOZART. Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491. Denis Matthews (piano), **Vienna State Opera Orchestra** conducted by **Hans Swarowsky.** Top Rank Mono 35/003 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

This is a very good version of the most impassioned of all Mozart's piano concertos, as one would expect. If it lacks some of the poetic agitation that some other performances catch, I suspect this is because Hans Swarowsky does not aim at much tension of phrasing in the orchestral accompaniment—and perhaps also because Denis Matthews confines himself pretty strictly to the expressive nuances that Mozart actually indicated in the score (except, naturally, in his own admirable cadenzas). The result is neat and never unmusical; it also seems (and I am sure this is deliberate) a little impersonal. This is much better, of course, than an excess of expression—it is much easier to supply in the imagination than to ignore what one actually hears; on the other hand I feel that Solomon's playing on his four-year-old disc (H.M.V. ALP1316—1/56) is more *suggestive* of emotional depths, without ever becoming stylistically inappropriate—and he also had the benefit of magnificent wind-playing from the Philharmonia. However, if you like your Mozart cool, you should certainly try this recording, for it is exceptionally good of its kind.

The B flat sonata is a generous filler (though less generous than Solomon's A major concerto!) and again played in a beautifully controlled and thoughtful manner. Here I am not conscious of any lack of sparkle, for this is chamber music and demands none of the extrovert brilliance of a concerto. Matthews' playing is, in fact, most moving in its complete lack of affectation. The piano tone is very realistic.

J.N.

MOZART. German Dances: K.600, Nos. 1 and 2; K.602, Nos. 1 and 2; K.605, Nos. 1, 2 and 3. **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Karel Sejna.**

VITASEK. Minuets. No. 1 in F major; No. 2 in B flat major: No. 3 in E flat major: No. 4 in G major. **Prague Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Vaclav Jiracek.** Supraphon Mono LPM325 (10 in., 14s. 9d. plus 4s. 9d. P.T.).

Sejna conducts a whole side of Mozart dances without ever letting them sound monotonous, for he employs a wide variety of speed and treatment, and gets his chamber orchestra to play them with delicacy and style. All the same, one doesn't necessarily want to listen to such a number of them at one go and a few scrolls here and there would be useful. There are none on this side. I can't find any trace of the first dance of K.605 and Sejna doesn't repeat the first

part of the second dance after its Trio (he goes back to the first bit of the Trio which does finish it off satisfactorily, unless you are a purist).

A real disappointment are the bells in the Trio of the third dance in this set. The sleeve note (by Supraphon's favourite Dr. Sp-El . . . is that really his name?) neglects to mention that this is titled "Sleigh Ride" and merely refers to "the gay jingling of bells" and "the effective, virtuoso trumpet solo" (without saying that it is the post-horn). "Jingling" turns out to be the word, for that, as far as I can hear, is all they do. But Mozart wrote for tuned bells, so that they can play in harmony. They are somewhat rare and perhaps there are none in Prague—London has at least two sets and you can hear how they should sound in Beecham's record of this dance, among others.

Still, this is attractive playing. I sat down thinking that I didn't want to listen to so many of these dances straight off, but I found I enjoyed the whole side—which is the best compliment I can pay to Sejna's performances.

Jan Augustin Vitasek (1770-1839) was a Czech composer who knew Mozart and whose work, I gather from the helpful Dr. Sp-El, is still largely unpublished. His Minuets are more solid than Mozart's dances but they have charm and are very nicely scored. Their conductor, Jiracek, also conducts this sort of music with real style (and this side is banded, by the way). The sound on both sides is most acceptable. T.H.

★**OFFENBACH. Gaieté Parisienne Ballet** (arr. Manuel Rosenthal)—excerpts.

★**STRAUSS, JOHANN. Graduation Ball Ballet** (arr. Dorati)—excerpts. **Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Antal Dorati.** Mercury Stereo AMS16005 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). Mono MMA11038 (7/59).

I described the mono version of this recording as "a bit fiery, but splendid for machines that will take it". That was made with a single microphone and no monitoring. The stereo was originally done as a three-channel job, later reduced to two by "a special electronic process". It is clearer-than-life stereo, with an over-directional effect that suggests the listener is on the rostrum rather than in stalls or grand tier. But what would never do for a Beethoven or a Brahms symphony is acceptable in scores that are all gaiety and orchestral glitter; and the emphasis on left and right and wind bang-centre) points up the brilliant playing of the Minneapolis Orchestra—with splendid 'cellos who have such a fat part in *Gaieté Parisienne*, alert violins, keen wind, and bright percussion. I enjoyed this record. A pity the sleeve is so drably laid out. Dorati is a wonderful ballet conductor. If only Covent Garden could persuade him to come here for some Royal Ballet performances! A.P.

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RCA RECORDS

★**PROKOFIEV. Love of Three Oranges**—Suite.

★**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. The Golden Cockerel**—Suite. **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **William Steinberg.** Capitol Stereo SP8445 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: P8445 (3/59).

When I wrote about the sound of the mono version of this record I remarked that it was a bit dry—more suitable for Prokofiev than for Rimsky. This stereo edition certainly isn't that. Not that it's plush (nor is Steinberg's conducting of the Rimsky side), but the gain in quality and spaciousness is really very great.

I have suggested that I prefer Steinberg in the Prokofiev—I think it a really good performance; but come to think of it, there is very little in the *Coq d'Or* suite that doesn't gain from an objective approach. With its effective sound, this record can be recommended to stereo buyers who like the coupling. T.H.

PROKOFIEV. Symphony No. 7, Op. 131. Overture Russe. Paris Conservatoire Orchestra conducted by **Jean Martinon.** R.C.A. Mono RB16176: ★Stereo SB2061 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Symphony No. 7, Mono:

Philh., Malko	(6/55) CLP1044
Czech P.O., Anosov	(11/57) LPV280

In his last symphony, written in 1952, a year before his death, Prokofiev returned from the forceful, serious mood of his middle symphonies to the elegance, grace and wit of his First—the *Classical*. Not that the style is mock-eighteenth-century; mainly it is light modern romantic, having affinities with his ballets *Cinderella* and *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a work full of magical atmosphere and genuine tunes—a modern symphony that nobody need run away from; its only fault, as far as I can see, is that the captivating waltz-scherzo is too long by half, outbalancing the rest of the symphony. Particularly fine features are the big soaring theme and the fascinating "prokky" tune for oboe and glockenspiel, both introduced in the first movement and brought back at the end of the finale.

One can say straightaway that the new recording completely outclasses the two older ones. Anosov is infuriatingly capricious, completely changing the tempo five or six times in a movement for no apparent reason; Malko is entirely orthodox in this respect, but unfortunately his interpretation is heavy-handed, being quite devoid of charm, imagination and wit. Martinon is sensitive to every aspect of the music—the quiet seriousness, the gentle romance, the delicate fantasy and the quaint humour—and brings exactly the right lightness of touch to the work. His judging of tempi, phrasing, and turning of corners (when Prokofiev *does* mark a change of tempo) are expert to a degree. The only criticism I have of the performance is that the horns and trumpets play, inevitably, with the characteristic French vibrato. One textual point: like Malko, and unlike Anosov, Martinon does not use the quiet ending, but the optional *vivace* coda, which I prefer.

The quality of the recording is extremely good. Every strand of the texture stands out clearly, though some may find the harp, piano, glockenspiel and xylophone a little too prominent, and the cor anglais more noticeably so. The stereo is the better of the two, not only in its warmer tone, but because the sound is a little more removed, and there is consequently a better blend of colours. D.C.

RACHMANINOV. Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27. Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Paul Paray.** Mercury Mono MMA11052: ★Stereo AMS16003 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg	(6/55) CTL7088
Leningrad P.O., Sanderling	(11/56) DGM18227
L.P.O., Boult	(10/57) RB16026
U.S.S.R. S.O., Gauk	(8/58) PMA1038

Paray gives a forthright account of this symphony, yet one that by no means lacks expressiveness. To hear the last drop of emotion wrung out of the music you will still have to go to the Russians, Sanderling and Gauk, who give it the full treatment, yet with such marvellously controlled playing that the result is an entire success. Yet the symphony can be looked at another way and Paray's view of it is something more like Boult's, expressive, but keeping the whole thing moving and seeing that architecturally it doesn't sprawl. Steinberg comes somewhere in between.

I admire the Boult/Paray approach but do think that Paray is inclined to make some of the music sound short-breathed—he seems unwilling to give an expansive phrase its full breadth. It is, however, a vital performance and an enjoyable one of its kind. The playing is excellent. The cuts are mostly those I understand to have been authorised by the composer and they greatly tighten up the work's cohesion. I do question, however, whether the big cut in the scherzo is a good idea, whatever the composer may have thought, for it totally leaves out the return of the lovely second theme, which is not only a loss in itself but entirely alters the balanced scheme of the whole movement. (Steinberg also makes this cut: Boult and the Russians do not.)

The mono record has the rich sound one wants for such rich music and a particularly telling bass—almost alarmingly so here and there. For real clarity, of course, one must hear the stereo disc, but though the sound of the full orchestra is so much better accommodated, I did miss something of the mono fullness. I heard alternate movements from each disc, sometimes stopping for direct comparison, and at one place, the big climax of the slow movement, I thought the mono record definitely won, with a more overwhelming impact of sound.

To sum up. The mono sound of all these records is at least pretty good. You can

base your choice on performances. I myself enjoy Sanderling when I feel like the sort of performance I have indicated he gives; when I prefer a more robust reading, then I think I just prefer Boult to Paray.

As to stereo, this is the only recording at the moment. It is a reasonably good one—but I think I should wait for a wider choice. T.H.

★RAVEL. Piano Concerto in G major. ★SHOSTAKOVICH. Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 101. Leonard Bernstein (piano), **New York Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Leonard Bernstein.** Philips Stereo SABL134 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Ravel Piano Concerto:
Michelangeli, Philharmonia, Gracis (10/58) ASD255
Henriot-Schweitzer, Boston S.O., Munch: (1/60) SB2053

We are used to pianist-composers directing Mozart concertos from the keyboard—usually not with notably better results than when two artists are present; it is something new to hear a couple of modern concertos directed in this way. Both performances represent a remarkable *tour de force*, of course, and one must salute that, though all that concerns the listener is what the result is like compared with other recordings of the works; and although it is again of no concern to us, I wonder how much expensive rehearsing with the orchestra was needed to achieve the remarkable ensemble one hears. This is indeed first-rate, but I cannot see that the conception of either work is more unified than in a well-prepared performance with separate soloist and conductor—and that would seem to be the only artistic benefit that might result. So let us give the Bernstein circus act a generous cheer and then forget it, imagining that these concertos were produced in the ordinary way.

The performances are brilliant by any standards. Bernstein has plenty of technique, capable of dealing with all the Ravel difficulties, and he is completely in sympathy with both concertos. The most difficult part of the Ravel always seems to me to be the long solo that opens the slow movement, for it can so easily sound dull, yet there is so little the pianist dare do to enliven its interest. Bernstein's shaping of the phrases and his subtle fluctuations of movement make it really lovely to hear. In those repeated notes of the finale Michelangeli is perhaps more incisive, yet in both the outer movements Bernstein shows no lack of brilliance. I put this performance in the Michelangeli class—and it has the advantage of better piano tone. The accompaniment, apart from a bit of badly tuned trumpet playing in the first movement, is excellent.

A mono version of the Shostakovich was well reviewed last December (Supraphon LPV481)—as Op. 102 by the way, whereas my score and the present record give it as Op. 101. Good as this was, I don't think it is merely the stereo sound that gives Bernstein the extra brilliance and vivacity over the Czech soloist, while the ensemble with the New York orchestra is spot on.

An attractive coupling and dazzling performances. T.H.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Scheherazade, Op. 35. Vienna Volksoper Orchestra (Miriam Soloviev, solo violin) conducted by **Mario Rossi.** Top Rank Mono 35/006 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

There are at least two superb versions of *Scheherazade* on record, so that I hope I may be excused from treating an indifferent one in great detail. Rossi's account of the score is efficient enough but scarcely imaginative. Incidentally, a cut is made in the third movement, "The Young Prince and the Young Princess"). The orchestral playing is not in any way distinguished and, once or twice, not impeccable.

The recording is of narrow range, so that when you set your volume control to suit the quiet passages, then the full orchestra is feeble—and vice versa. Wind instruments often sound much closer when they are playing solos than they do elsewhere. The solo 'cellist is particularly near. I'd like to hit the tambourine player on the head as relentlessly as he hits his instrument: but perhaps the recording is to blame here, too.

Beecham is superb in this work (H.M.V. ALP1564): should you not like him, you can hardly go wrong with Monteux (R.C.A. RB16077). T.H.

SCHUMANN. Symphony No. 1 in B flat major, Op. 38, "Spring". Manfred Overture, Op. 115. Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Paul Paray.** Mercury Mono MMA11070 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

Coupled as above:
Berlin P.O., Kempe (7/58) ALP1581
Symphony No. 1,:
Israel P.O., Kletzki (4/57) 33CX1419
P.P.O., Boult (1/57) NCT17004
L.S.O., Krips (2/58) LXT5347

I am a devoted Schumann lover, but I am bound to say that this record gave me not one scrap of pleasure anywhere. I don't think Paray shows the least sympathy with this composer's music, nor can I imagine that Mercury think this good sound. Paray dashes through the symphony without ever stopping to caress a phrase, to bring out the beauty of this or that.

I don't know where Mercury put their celebrated single microphone on this occasion, but I hope they try a different place next time. Schumann, of course, wants warmth of sound; this is so thin and strident as to give no pleasure to the ear. The opening brass call is dreadfully rasping; the violin tune at the start of the slow movement has no real tonal quality at all and the 'cellos, when it's their turn, sound wiry. But, indeed, the whole thing is not to be considered, competitively, as a performance nor as a recording. Do I exaggerate? Well, no doubt one could find some good points to mention. But when one loves a composer specially, it is difficult to be tolerant of such an unsympathetic production as this.

If you want a record of these two works, that conducted by Kempe is without doubt preferable. But it's worth adding a point or two about the other versions of the symphony. Both Krips and Kletzki have the 1st and 4th Symphonies on their discs, a very generous coupling indeed, and if you want both works, then Krips is my choice of all these conductors. (Kletzki does the 1st Symphony beautifully, but his account of the 4th is extraordinarily eccentric.) Boult's performance, also very good, is by itself, neatly on a 10-inch disc.

I must add that they all play the opening brass passage as it is printed in the score, except Krips, who puts it a third lower (as Schumann originally wrote it and to which many think it should be restored). So, though I have recommended Krips, if you feel strongly that you like the opening in its higher version, don't say I haven't warned you! T.H.

★SCHUBERT. Symphony No. 9 in C major, D.944, "The Great". Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Rafael Kubelik.** H.M.V. Stereo ASD325 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono ALP 1751 (1/60).

Bavarian R.O., E. Jochum (1/59) SLPM138001
L.S.O., Krips (1/59) SXL2045

I gave my reasons last month for not being particularly taken with Kubelik's reading of Schubert's C major symphony, and of course they still apply to the stereo version. In fact the stereo version invites even more revealing comparisons than the mono one did. Both Jochum and Krips allow themselves little liberties with the score, as M.M. remarked when he reviewed them a year ago; yet even when these liberties are a little questionable, it has to be admitted that both these conductors maintain a far greater sense of momentum than Kubelik does with his superficially more literal approach.

As to the quality of the recorded sound, all three versions are perfectly acceptable, although I myself prefer the more immediate sound of the Decca and the new H.M.V. to the large-hall acoustic favoured by the D.G.G. engineers. On this count there seems to me really nothing to choose between Kubelik and Krips, but on musical grounds, as I have already indicated, I should still prefer the latter. J.N.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, "Pathétique". London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Sir Adrian Boult.** Pye Mono GGL0036 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.): ★Stereo GSGL10036 (12 in., 20s. 9d. plus 6s. 9d. P.T.).

A colleague of mine noted for his strict taste and disapproval of Tchaikovsky as a vulgar rhapsodiser noted, not long ago, that Sir Adrian Boult was a rarely satisfying interpreter of Peter Ilyich because he presented this composer with the right kind of inhibitions. I can't at all see the virtue in a conception of Tchaikovsky as a sort of well-mannered, repressed public schoolboy, but I was interested to hear how this view worked on the *Pathétique* Symphony, which ought to sound positively uncomfortable, even embarrassing, to listen to.

Boult, a great advocate of structure in symphonies, pins his interpretation to the finale, which he causes to be deeply felt, even frightening—not at all public-schoolish. He prepares for this with the fastest performance of the March-Scherzo that I think

I've ever heard, hair-raising like the journey of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse over the earth, and in mood really carefree, though unhealthily so, which may well be a valid interpretation—it certainly threw new light on the music. But the first two movements are given a cold, haughty character that obscures great music; there is no stupefaction in the climax of the first movement, no nostalgic enchantment in the 5/4 movement. The L.P.O. plays extremely well: only the very fast scherzo sometimes upsets intonation. And the stereo is so clearly directed that you can point to the offending players. Curiously, Sir Adrian seems to have violins on his right, 'cellos on his left—this could be a mechanical fault, though it hasn't effected the clarity. Best available *Pathétique*? Probably Monteux at the moment, unless you can find Fricsay D.G.G. (now deleted). Barbirolli/Pye is also very successful. W.S.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Francesca da Rimini, Op. 32. Hamlet Overture, Op. 67a. New York Stadium Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Leopold Stokowski.** Top Rank Mono 35/014 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

"Stokowski conducting the Stadium Symphony Orchestra of New York playing Tchaikovsky" shouts the sleeve-note at you—and for once it's true, they *are* playing Tchaikovsky, not Tchaikovsky-arranged-Stokowski. And, what's more, they're playing it magnificently. Having often gunned for Stokowski in my time, on account of his pervasive vulgarity, I'm glad to be able to say that these performances are really, as he would no doubt put it, "stoopendous". When this conductor is at his best, there are very few in the world to touch him.

The music, of course, suits him down to the ground. Both works are packed full of the most violent romantic turmoil—whirling string and wind figurations shot through with jagged *fortissimo* barkings of brass—and Stokowski brings to all this a precision, drive and intensity that one can only marvel at (the storm in *Francesca* has to be heard to be believed). His fantastic showmanship comes into its own here, for the music is of the super-rhetorical kind that needs it to make its full impact. Equally astounding is the masterly handling of the lyrical elements: in *Hamlet*, the aching passion of the "Ophelia" theme is brought out to the full without any vulgarisation, and in *Francesca*, the quite different love-theme—a quiet, melancholy, haunting clarinet melody—is shaped with rare gentleness and sensibility. Most important of all, the various contrasting elements are integrated, in each case, into a performance which is a unified whole, moving from start to finish with a single impulse. These are performances in a million; to hear these rarely-played and much-disparaged works played like this is to realise that Tchaikovsky was one of the very great, who could meet Dante and Shakespeare on their own level.

The recording is one of enormous power—not at all comfortable to cope with in a small room—and is quite an achievement in hi-fi. For once, the multi-microphone technique beloved by Stokowski seems to have been replaced by a more overall type of balance, in which, nevertheless, practically every part of the score stands out in vivid relief. A few solo passages are, it is true, more prominent than they would be in the concert hall, but if the wind statements of the "Ophelia" theme have been boosted, perhaps it is just as well, in view of Tchaikovsky's obscuring string texture, and if the strings get lost at letter N in *Hamlet*, it's surely Tchaikovsky's fault, with his *fff* trombones. D.C.

★**TCHAIKOVSKY. Swan Lake, Op. 20**—excerpts. **Ballet Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Joseph Levine.** Capitol Stereo SP8416 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: P8416 (9/58).

Excerpts: No. 9, Introduction; No. 12, Danse des Cygnes; No. 13, Pas de deux; No. 14, Les Cygnettes; No. 14a, Variation; No. 16, The Swan Queen; No. 4, Valse; No. 22, Danse Espagnole; No. 24; Danse Hongroise; No. 25, Mazurka; No. 30, Danses des Petits Cygnes; No. 32, Finale Ultimo.

★**TCHAIKOVSKY. Sleeping Beauty, Op. 66**—excerpts. **Ballet Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Joseph Levine.** Capitol Stereo SP8449 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: P8449 (3/59).

Excerpts: Introduction and March; Pas de Six—Prologue; Fairies' Variations; Candite; Coulante Fleur de Farine; Falling Crumbs; Singing Canary; Violente; Aurora's Variation; Pas de Quatre, Act 3; Puss-in-Boots; Pas de Quatre (Bluebird); Adagio, Act 3; The Three Ivans; Finale, Act 3.

These have been written about at some length before. Both sound better in stereo form. The *Swan Lake* selection has a rather swimming-bathish acoustic perhaps, and the brass sound coarse in the Spanish and Hungarian Dances, but Levine gives a suitably voluptuous character to the music. The only surprise in the contents is the appearance in the middle of the Act 2 excerpts of Siegfried's variation from the Black Swan *pas de deux* (which belongs in the first or third act, according to which version of the score you adhere to).

The *Sleeping Beauty* contains a sensible selection of music, rather less well played; the clang of piano in the Apotheosis is a mistake. I am sure. But the stereo gives extra bloom and roundness. W.S.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23. Aldo Ciccolini (piano), **French National Radio Orchestra** conducted by **Constantin Silvestri.**

LISZT. Mephisto Waltz. Aldo Ciccolini (piano). H.M.V. Mono XLP20013 (12 in., 16s. 11½d. plus 5s. 6½d. P.T.).

This is a delightfully crisp and tasteful performance of the Tchaikovsky concerto—which is, I feel, not exactly what one wants. Aldo Ciccolini attains to a high degree of virtuosity, but it is always tautly controlled; he never essays the grand manner (a *sine qua non*, on feels, in this work). For example, when he takes up the opening horn phrase, he gives it no kind of rhetoric, nor does he make the interspersed arpeggios into the grandiloquent flourishes that they should surely be. But perhaps this treatment will please some tastes: anyone who is weary of the "battering" approach to this work should certainly try out the disc for himself. Certainly, the delicate virtuoso passages are most beautifully played.

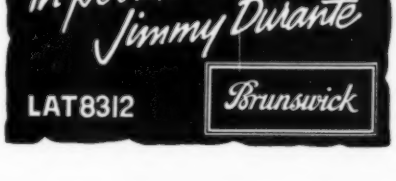
A more serious shortcoming is the lack of feeling in the lyrical parts of the score. If everything were as poetically played as the slow movement's main theme when it returns halfway through, one would have no cause to grumble, but most of the time, the quieter moments are severely cool and classical, with very little rubato. This is, of course, entirely in keeping with Ciccolini's general conception: there is a unity about the whole thing which compels admiration, and pianist and conductor work together splendidly (even if they do not quite bring off the two notoriously difficult tempo gearings—the second subject of the first movement and the opening two statements of the slow movement's main theme). The *Mephisto Waltz* receives the same treatment as the Concerto, and it seems to me just as inappropriate.

The recording is a good one on the whole. The piano is spotlighted, but not to an exaggerated degree; the orchestral part is always clearly audible, except for a few important woodwind counterpoints in the finale. The orchestral sound is lifelike, though the climaxes are a little congested; the piano tone is warm but slightly lacking in brilliance. My copy has a swish for most of the second side. D.C.

TELEMANN. Oboe Concerto in E minor. André Lardrot (oboe), **I Solisti di Zagreb** conducted by **Antonio Janigro.** Top Rank Mono 15/005 (7 in., 11s. 3½d. plus 3s. 8½d. P.T.).

This EP is devoted to a concerto for oboe and strings by Telemann, but both disc-label and sleeve include the name of Stefano Passaggio, a solo viola-player. Why a solo viola should appear in an oboe concerto is, at first glance, a mystery; but the explanation here is that the present disc is an extract from a 12-inch record not so far released in this country, and that the record in question contains a performance of Telemann's G major Viola Concerto, in which the soloist is Stefano Passaggio. The names of both soloists, printed correctly on the 12-inch sleeve, have been automatically transferred to the EP sleeve, and will doubtless confuse all who buy the disc.

Lardrot gives a good account of this delightful little work, whose Allegro contains an unusual interlude in contrasting metre. Janigro and his strings accompany very sympathetically, and the recorded balance is excellent. D.S.



Liszt

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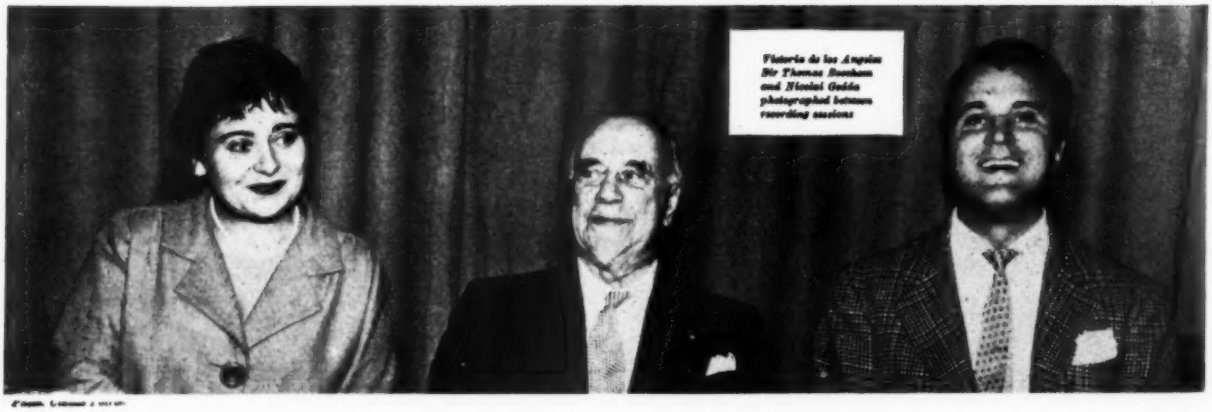
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VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. Symphony No. 9 in E minor. London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Sir Adrian Boult.** Top Rank Mono 40/008 (12 in., 30s. 2½d. plus 9s. 9½d. P.T.).

At the start of this disc, Sir Adrian Boult is heard saying, "We had hoped that our beloved friend Ralph Vaughan Williams would have been with us in the studio while we were recording this symphony; but his death took place seven hours before we began our work on it. It's a wonderful thought that many musical friends in the United States will be enabled to hear his last symphony by means of this record". Well, not particularly wonderful, really, except to someone who had never heard of recording before, but we know what he meant; and mention of the U.S. brings home the fact that this disc of the last symphony of our greatest composer of recent times, which comes from the Everest catalogue, was available on the other side of the Atlantic before here. A brilliant, most vivid recording it is too: if this is the standard we can expect from this company, its future issues will be looked forward to with keen expectation.

One of the remarkable things about Vaughan Williams was the way in which, even after the age of 80, he interested himself in new sonorities; during the last six years of his life, for example, he produced the *Romance* for harmonica, the Tuba Concerto, and the Eighth Symphony with its array of metallophones. Here, in his last symphony, he makes use of three saxophones (an instrument already called for in *Job* and the Sixth Symphony) and a flugelhorn, a "beautiful and neglected instrument", in V.W.'s words, "not usually allowed in the select circles of the orchestra and banished to the brass band". The saxophones come to the fore in the first movement and the Scherzo—a movement highly characteristic of V.W., with its galumphing boisterousness and contrapuntal high jinks; the flugelhorn has an important solo at the start of the *Andante* (based, the composer reveals, on an early work long since scrapped). Stylistically the symphony looks back over the composer's output: the ominous, dramatic first movement at times recalls the Fourth Symphony, and elsewhere there are retrospective glances at the Sixth, the *Pastoral* and the *Antarctica*. Yet if the work breaks no fresh ground, it is still utterly personal throughout: scarcely a bar but proclaims its author. And, as the composer teasingly insists in a self-deprecatory programme note, in form the work is far from orthodox: the *Andante* "seems to have no logical connection between its various themes" (what an opening here for the probings of the Functional Analysis boys!), and the finale is "really two movements played without a break, and connected by three short phrases which recur throughout".

It is entirely right that Sir Adrian should be in charge of this first recording of the Ninth Symphony; for though he did not give the première—that honour fell to Sir Malcolm Sargent in 1958—he is recognised as probably the finest interpreter of Vaughan Williams's works, and his recordings of the other symphonies (made in the presence of the composer) have become classics. This one has the same authority, and can be recommended without any reservation. L.S.

VERDI. Overtures and Preludes. Overture to "Nabucco"†. Prelude to Act 1 of "Aida"†. Overture to "Giovanna d'Arco"†. Overture to "I Vespri Siciliani". Preludes to Acts 1 and 3 of "La Traviata". Overture to "La Forza del Destino". Items marked † with **Philharmonia Orchestra,** remainder with **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra,** all conducted by **Tullio Serafin.** Columbia Mono 33CX1684 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

In his last two operas Verdi dispensed with overtures altogether, and throughout his life he seems to have had a sneaking feeling that there was something un-Italian about the whole idea of purely instrumental music. As the preface to my Eulenburg score of the *Nabucco* overture elegantly puts it: "Only vocal, chiefly stage music, is rooting in the Italian soul after his opinion". Yes indeed: but in spite of this, what eloquence he achieved within the less formal scheme of a mere "prelude". The subtlety and restraint of the *Traviata* preludes are all the more remarkable when you hear them in close conjunction with the overtures to *Nabucco* and *Joan of Arc*, written respectively ten and eight years earlier. Delightful as the early overtures are in their ebullient, ham-fisted way, they really contribute almost nothing to the drama they introduce, while the preludes to Acts 1 and 3 of *La Traviata* create a whole emotional world before we ever see the characters who are to people it. The only later overtures of Verdi's which are not inseparably attached to the opening scene are those to *The Sicilian Vespers* and *The Force of Destiny*, and in both cases this may have been due to the local customs of the opera houses at Paris and St. Petersburg, for which they were written. *The Sicilian Vespers* overture is a sad back-sliding, with its conventional mixture of solemnity, brilliance and yearning, after the *Traviata* preludes, but in *The Force of Destiny* Verdi did achieve a full-scale separate overture that really does foreshadow the drama, and very well the Royal Philharmonic play it on this record. In fact every one of these performances bears the marks of Maestro Serafin's profound experience of Verdi's work. A certain lack of impetus would be forgivable in the interpretations of a man who passed his eightieth birthday a couple of years ago, but there is nothing to forgive; even the *galop* sections of *Nabucco* are brought off by the Philharmonia with as much dash as anyone could ask for, and in fact the only thing I find to complain of in the whole disc is the slightly insecure rhythm in the opening section of *The Sicilian Vespers*, where one cannot hear whether or not the demisemiquaver figure is a triplet or not (it is not). But this is the ideal record to persuade anyone who imagines he is only interested in orchestral music that there may be something in opera after all: each single overture or prelude makes one want to hear what really ought to follow. J.N.

WAGNER. Parsifal: Good Friday Spell; Symphonic Synthesis of Act 3. **Houston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Leopold Stokowski.** Top Rank Mono 40/007 (12 in., 30s. 2½d. plus 9s. 9½d. P.T.).

Stokowski conducts *Parsifal* with an erotic intensity more suited to *Tristan*. I can't imagine that anyone who cares about *Parsifal* as an opera would like this—and I don't refer to the absence of voices. Strings play with a vibrato more appropriate to Tchaikovsky and every *ausdrucksvoll* in the score is a fatal temptation.

The recording itself is extremely vivid; indeed, as sound it is wonderful. As an evocation of the spirit of the opera the whole thing is deplorable. At least, that's how it strikes this listener.

The *Good Friday Spell*, one side, lasts only 11 minutes, by the way—and this is not stereo. Not enough. T.H.

WAGNER. Orchestral Excerpts. Overture to "Tannhäuser". Ride of the Valkyries from "Die Walküre". Prelude to Act 1 of "Lohengrin". Prelude and Liebestod from "Tristan und Isolde". Funeral March from "Götterdämmerung". **Paris Opera Orchestra** conducted by **Pierre Dervaux.** H.M.V. Mono XLP20011 (12 in., 16s. 11½d. plus 5s. 6½d. P.T.).

Yet another collection of Wagner orchestral excerpts, I thought, and, as I listened, at least as well played and recorded as these always seem to be. But it isn't quite "yet another", for look at the price; and, what is more, the sides are most generously filled.

Dervaux gets some excellent playing and it was only in the high reaches of the opening of the *Lohengrin* Prelude that I thought it not quite first-rate. His interpretation of the Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* is perhaps too impulsive to be truly heroic, but this trait serves him well in the *Tristan* excerpts, where you will find real passion. The rest is extremely well done and you could play this record to those friends of yours who sniff at anything less than two pounds a disc and have no reason to apologise for it. A bargain in the best sense of the word. T.H.

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See page 404

HOWARD HANSON. Riegger. New Dance*. **Porter.** Poem and Dance†. **McBride.** Mexican Rhapsody§. **Nelson.** Savannah River Holiday. **Mitchell.** Kentucky Mountain Portraits. **Vardell.** Joe Clark Steps Out. **Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Howard Hanson.** Mercury Mono MMA11066: ★Stereo AMS16016 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). Items marked * and † are available in mono only and have previously appeared on MRL2556 (8/58) and MRL2551 (9/58) respectively. Item marked § is available in stereo only and has previously appeared in Mono on MMA11012 (4/59). The remaining items are available in both forms.

Of all the Mercury issues of modern American music I have heard, this is by far the most satisfying, probably because it consists almost entirely of light music, a genre in which American composers are usually more spontaneous and successful. Those who buy the stereo disc will have the best of the bargain, for a colourful if incoherent *Mexican Rhapsody* replaces works of slightly more serious intent by the "contemporary" composers Wallingford Riegger and Quincey Porter, who seem out of place in this happy-go-lucky company. Porter's brooding Prelude seems particularly ill-chosen, and the dances by him and Riegger are not particularly enlivening. The *Mexican Rhapsody* presents a number of well-known tunes, notably *La Cucaracha*, and its gusto makes up for its extremely loose construction.

The best of the bunch is undoubtedly the *Savannah River Holiday*. This is a cleverly organised piece of pure light music, with chattering and pounding brass, snappy clarinet and piccolo tunes, a soaring string melody of the kind Malcolm Arnold sometimes uses, and a dreamy middle section tastefully evoking the American landscape. The two remaining works draw on traditional American tunes. *Joe Clark Steps Out* is a jaunty unassuming piece, modest in its brevity, but the *Kentucky Portraits* are more ambitious, glancing occasionally at the more highbrow "popular" idiom of Aaron Copland. The trenchant brass opening of the first piece (*Cindy*) benefits from this influence, but the attempts at two-part string counterpoint deteriorate into the contemporary "grey" mood; one is relieved when the tune after which the movement is named sets off at a spanking speed and gets the music going properly. The second portrait (*Ballad*) is a kind of American equivalent of Vaughan Williams and Holst in their capacity as folksong arrangers—a lovely slow pentatonic melody is chastely and movingly presented with gently clashing diatonic and modal harmonies. The final movement (*Shivaree*) uses breezily a tune that I know well but can't for the life of me place; a pity that, after the slower interlude, the composer provides a brief, noisy, irrelevant coda, instead of bringing back his long, racing opening section.

Altogether this is a disc of high entertainment value. The performances have great vitality and bite; the recordings are of unusual clarity, the stereo being a particularly stunning piece of hi-fi.

D.G.

LORIN MAAZEL. Respighi. The Pines of Rome. **Moussorgsky.** Night on a Bare Mountain. **Rimsky-Korsakov.** Capriccio Espagnol, Op. 34. **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Lorin Maazel.** D.G.G. Mono LPM18574: ★Stereo SLPM138033 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This is just the sort of music I have always wanted to hear this gifted young conductor record, for he has all the qualities for it. He can make a great orchestra play wonderfully well—and some of this music wants playing wonderfully well to be enjoyable: he has plenty of orchestral imagination, which is really what all this wants. *The Pines of Rome* is very successful indeed, both in its brilliance and in the romantic moods of the middle movements. (And I do like D.G.G.'s nightingale.)

Moussorgsky's *Night on a Bare Mountain* comes off as it seldom does—this is the best performance since Giulini's: and the *Capriccio Espagnol* is excellent, too.

Good sound. D.G.G. seldom go in for the utmost sparkle, but it is as warm and rich as one could want. That comment was made after listening to the stereo disc. The mono version arrived some time later and it happened that I was unable to make a direct comparison. But none is necessary: I thought the mono perfectly lovely in its sound. Perhaps one has come to expect more vividness from stereo recording. Certainly the mono has warmth and richness and sparkle as well.

T.H.

★**HERBERT VON KARAJAN. Opera Intermezzi. Manon Lescaut** (Puccini): Act 3. **La Traviata** (Verdi): Prelude Act 3. **I Pagliacci** (Leoncavallo). **L'Amico Fritz** (Mascagni): Act 3. **Notre Dame** (Schmidt). **The Trojans** (Berlioz): Royal Hunt and Storm. **Khovantschina** (Moussorgsky): Entr'acte, Act 4. **Les Contes d'Hoffman** (Offenbach): Barcarolle. **Goyescas** (Granados). **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia Stereo SAX2294 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

I found this record less attractive to listen to than I had anticipated from its title, largely because the first side is made up of such uncontrasted pieces, none of any distinction; and the last and longest, the Franz Schmidt piece, is the most wearisome of all. You may raise an eyebrow at my talking about music of no distinction when the side includes a *Traviata* Prelude, but taken out of its context and set amongst these second-raters, it somehow fails to make its own effect.

Side two starts off with the one really thrilling piece on the whole disc, Berlioz' *Royal Hunt and Storm*, a tone poem in its own right and a superb one at that. Karajan secures a highly vivid performance and this lifts us at once out of that sort of music which, whatever effect it may make in the theatre, is not always strong enough to stand on its own feet.

This is, as you will have gathered, a record for those who are specially interested in titles such as these and as such it can be recommended, for the playing is always beautiful (how good to hear the Offenbach *Barcarolle* played like this) and the recording sounds very well. This is not a stereo reissue of the earlier Karajan Operatic Intermezzi on 33CX1265.

T.H.

★**HERBERT VON KARAJAN. Tchaikovsky.** 1812 Overture, Op. 49. **Berlioz.** Hungarian March from "The Damnation of Faust", Op. 24. **Liszt.** Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C minor. **Sibelius.** Valse Triste, Op. 44. **Weber.** Invitation to the Dance, Op. 65. **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia Stereo SAX2302 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: 33CX1571 (9/59).

In either mono or stereo version, 1812 seems to take a little while working up towards being the first-class recording that all the other pieces on the disc declare themselves more immediately. But Tchaikovsky's explosive and triumphant end is cleanly handled here by the stereo. Otherwise there is little improvement on the mono; but either version, in fact, offers a combination of good sound and very good performances. For discographers: the Liszt is given in the Müller-Berghaus orchestration, the Weber in that of Berlioz.

M.M.

★**FRITZ REINER. Tchaikovsky.** 1812 Overture, Op. 49. **Mendelssohn.** Hebrides Overture, Op. 26, "Fingal's Cave". **Liszt.** Mephisto Waltz. **Brahms.** Tragic Overture, Op. 81. **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner.** R.C.A. Stereo SB2059 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

This is the first stereo version of Tchaikovsky's 1812 that I have heard, and so I cannot tell you what you are doubtless longing to know—whether the bells and bass drum in the closing pages are the most realistic yet. I *can* tell you, though, that no cannon are audibly fired, in case that is the effect you are particularly interested in. Really, what a terrible piece this is, and how Brahms would have hated to find his *Tragic Overture* sharing a disc with it! Reiner's performance has enormous brilliance and accuracy, but I miss the sense of consciously enjoyed vulgarity that I suspect Beecham might bring to it. In more musical terms I suspect it is a certain rigidity of rhythm that is at fault, for both the Brahms and the Mendelssohn, though excellently played, also give the impression of being over-disciplined; they lack the genial, expansive quality that other conductors bring to them.

Perhaps I am wrong to ask for this. After all, Fingal's Cave is not in the Mediterranean (though Beecham tried to locate it there) and the *Tragic Overture* clearly depicts the hammer-blows of fate. Not much scope for geniality here, one

might say. Yet both works have contrasting passages in a warmer mood, and the transition to *molto più moderato* at the beginning of the development section of the Brahms (to take just one example) surely needs to be *eased* a little more gracefully, even though there is no *rallentando* in the score. A matter of taste, of course, and if this rather Toscanini-like approach is to yours in these works you need have no qualms about the quality of sound. It is a little reverberant, perhaps, so that one cannot quite tell whether or not Reiner is using the solo string sextet Tchaikovsky calls for at the beginning of 1812; but if the sound is a little dense it is also well balanced, with a good dynamic range.

J.N.

★**ARTHUR WINOGRAD. Rimsky-Korsakov.** Russian Easter Festival Overture: Dance of the Buffoons from "The Snow Maiden". **Moussorgsky.** Polonaise from "Boris Godunov". **Borodin.** Polovtsian Dances from "Prince Igor". **Glière.** Russian Sailors' Dance. **Virtuoso Symphony of London** conducted by **Arthur Winograd.** Audio Fidelity Stereo FCS50009 (12 in., 35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.).

The sleeve of this record contains a lot of technical jargon (which is Greek to me), advertising a new standard in hi-fi, and without wishing to be dogmatic, I believe that the result justifies the company's claim. Certainly this is the best-recorded sound I have yet heard (if one likes the orchestra pretty near), especially in the *Russian Easter Festival Overture*. It has the widest stereo spread I have come across, too: for once, one almost has the illusion that one is at a live performance.

Orchestra and conductor live up to the level of the recording. Who the "Virtuoso Symphony of London" may be, I don't know, but they *are* virtuoso, and their tone, particularly the strings and trombones, is outstandingly rich and rounded. Arthur Winograd is a forty-year-old New Yorker, original 'cellist of the Juilliard Quartet; his recorded performances of Beethoven's and Schubert's fifth symphonies were found dull by M.M., but there's no doubt that he's perfectly at home with the dazzling colours and vibrant rhythms of Russian music.

A glance at the titles will show that this is one of the most noisily exciting concerts one could put together, so for anyone with a powerful appetite for thrilling sound, this is a record to get. The Overture is beautifully broad and firmly spaced out; the Polovtsian Dances go with a bang (though the languorous movement could be more lilting); the Dance of the Buffoons is breathtakingly brilliant, and so is the Sailors' Dance; the latter ends with a *crescendo-accelerando* to end all *crescendi-accelerandi*, which almost literally brings the house down. Only the Polonaise doesn't quite come off, owing to a lack of precision in the dotted rhythms.

The record sets a new high standard in price as well as hi-fi, it will be noticed, but it's undoubtedly full value for money.

D.C.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BEETHOVEN. 'Cello Sonatas. No. 2 in G minor, Op. 5, No. 2: No. 5 in D major, Op. 102, No. 2. **Mieczyslav Horszowski** (piano), **Pablo Casals** ('cello). Philips Mono ABL3272 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Casals and Horszowski originally recorded these sonatas before the war; but these are fresh performances by the veteran pair, made in Bonn in 1958 (though the quality of sound may not suggest so recent a date). For all the dryness of tone, however (and No. 5 is better than No. 2 in this regard), this issue is bound to prove of interest. One needs to overlook some slightly uneven balance (in the slow introduction to No. 2, for example, the piano sounds a good deal nearer than the 'cello), innumerable groans, grunts and vocal manifestations of intensity from Casals (particularly obtrusive in the first movement of No. 2 and the slow movement of No. 5), and a few small flaws of ensemble and—dare one say it?—of bow attack and intonation; but the general tautness, the beautiful cantabile quality of the long phrases in the Rondo finale of the G minor, the fine fire at the start of the D major and the momentum which carries the whole first movement forward, the firm control of the contrapuntal finale, the overall maturity in these readings, compel admiration. The music glows with a unique fervour. There are details with which one could disagree—the extreme deliberation at the start of the development section in the *Allegro* of No. 2, for example; but on the whole one feels impelled to contribute to the long sprinkle of applause to which, rather pointlessly, we are treated at the end of No. 5.

L.S.

BEETHOVEN. 'Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 69.
PROKOFIEV. 'Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 119. André Navarra ('cello), **Alfred Holecek** (piano). Supraphon Mono LPV468 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

A hearing of this first recording of Prokofiev's 'Cello Sonata may well perplex a good many people: extremely naif passages, a gently lyrical style, fairly orthodox harmony, almost no trace of the old Adam except for a pale half-recollection of the *Peter and the Wolf* march—and yet obviously the work of a real composer and a craftsman. How to explain this? We turn to the sleeve-note (written in rather odd English) for guidance. "When Prokofiev returned to the Soviet Union, he also changed his attitude to art. He felt that an artist must be closely linked with the people, that his art must give voice to their ideas. One of the most beautiful expressions of this spirit is his 'Cello Sonata, published in 1951." But this is pulling the wool over our eyes with a vengeance. The sonata was actually written in 1949, that is to say after the notorious Zhdanov enquiry, in which Prokofiev and other leading Soviet composers were hauled over the coals for their "formalism" (as opposed to the desired "realism"), and a firm directive was given to all composers on their approach to music. Prokofiev had to eat humble pie: "The Decree creates conditions for restoring the health of Soviet music. I have tried to get rid of formalist elements, but if there is still some formalism in some of my works it is probably due to my insufficient realisation that our people do not want such music". And so his next works were composed with due regard for the tiny minds who controlled art, without however—since Prokofiev was a genuine artist with a conscience—bringing things right down to a lowest common denominator of musical understanding. The marvel is rather that he was able to include not only some very effective ideas, but some worthwhile ones too, in this enforcedly simple style. Navarra plays the sonata most beautifully, with finely poised phrases, impeccable intonation and unfailingly lovely tone, and so far as we can tell Holecek partners him well, though since the piano has the thin pinched sound we used to get on records thirty years ago the balance of tone leaves everything to be desired.

The engineers have woken themselves up for the Beethoven, which is infinitely superior in tone, even if the piano is still on the dry side. Here we can see the pianist's true worth (this must surely be the same artist as the Franz Holetschek we know from Viennese recordings?); and fine chamber music playing it is, even if Navarra emerges as the more forceful personality of the two. It has real spirit—the finale is splendidly gay—and both artists play into each other's hands excellently throughout. I feel that with the exception of the Casals-Serkin version, which is rather a special case, this is probably the most satisfying performance of the A major on the market.

L.S.

BEETHOVEN. Septet in E flat major, Op. 20.
MENDELSSOHN. Octet in E flat major, Op. 20. Chamber Music Ensemble of the **Bamberg Symphony Orchestra.** Vox Mono PL11230 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Beethoven Septet:
Vienna Octet (3/56) LXT5094
Berlin P.O. Ensemble (9/59) BLP1102
Mendelssohn Octet:
Vienna Octet (2/54) LXT2870

Bogey for the Beethoven Septet is by common consent about forty-two minutes. The Bamberg players manage their round in just under *thirty*-two. This has undoubtedly advantages of convenience and economy in allowing the Septet uninterrupted performance on one side of a disc; but any other advantages are hard indeed to suggest. The music suffers considerably from abbreviation by repeat-cutting—a device that most certainly has its points when used with a sense of purpose, but which here, indulged in in this degree, seems merely to be inspired by stop-watch desperation. Yet the music suffers perhaps even more from the extraordinarily fast tempi that needs must be set nearly everywhere. Here and there it is possible to enjoy the playing, which is not unduly insensitive or ill-balanced, but more often than not the altogether unreasonable

speeds are as positively irritating to the listener as they surely must have been to the players. Add that the recording is cavernous and unclear and it will be readily seen that the economy and convenience of this new version of the Beethoven Septet are going to be expensively bought. Far better recording and performance are offered by both its competitors.

Between these two competitors, however, choice is not so easy. The H.M.V. recording tends slightly to obscure the violin, the Decca to give it slight prominence; but this seems to be a nebulous point on which to try to base a decision. And if Decca's twelve inches do allow a greater generosity in repeat-making than H.M.V.'s ten, yet even those H.M.V. cuts are far less lethal than those of Vox.

The new version of the Mendelssohn Octet is not, in general, too fast; here instead it is the dynamic level of the playing that holds the ear fascinated. Nearly everywhere it is too loud, sometimes ludicrously so. When the inner parts should drop to a murmur to allow the tune through (and in this Octet it is often) they do not do so; when the whole music drops to a hush its beauty may be perceptible from the score, but it is certainly not from this performance. Again the recording is cavernous and unclear; and again it is necessary to suggest that in spite of its economy the new Vox is no match for its older competitor. This disc has now been re-transferred by Decca in an excellent quality of sound, displaying to great advantage the strong and sensitive performance given the Mendelssohn by the Viennese players; it still, however, takes all of two twelve-inch sides. M.M.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3. Sonata in F major for 'cello and piano, Op. 17. Mieczyslav Horszowski (piano), **Sandor Végh** (violin), **Pablo Casals** ('cello). Philips Mono ABL3270 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Stereo: SABL126 (10/59).

I listened to these performances again with considerable enjoyment—though still feeling that, even when Casals is soloist, I prefer the Horn Sonata played by a horn rather than a 'cello. A return to the stereo sound showed how superior for chamber music it can be, even to a very good mono recording such as this is. A.P.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Trio No. 4 in D major, Op. 70, No. 1, "Geister". Mieczyslav Horszowski (piano), **Sandor Végh** (violin), **Pablo Casals** ('cello).

CASALS. Les Rois Mages. 'Cello Ensemble of the **Lamoureux Orchestra** directed by **Pablo Casals.**

FAURE. Elégie. Ensemble of ten 'cellos with the **Lamoureux Orchestra** conducted by **Pablo Casals.** Philips Mono ABL3273 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Beethoven Trio:
Trio di Trieste (12/56) LXT5253
Santoliquido Trio (1/57) DGM18044

The Beethoven trio was recorded at a public concert in Bonn in the autumn of 1958, and at the end there is some rather half-hearted applause. I see no point in leaving this on the disc; it is not as though there were a continuous background of coughs, and without it one would hardly have suspected an audience was present. Only in the slow movement can you hear very faintly some of those grunts that admirers of Casals are by now quite used to. His phrasing, and indeed Végh's, is so musical and expressive that I am almost inclined to put this disc at the top of the list. The two rival combinations are much more streamlined, and in the finale achieve a rhythmic tightness and glitter less in evidence in the rather slow-moving performance under review. As with any public performance, there are tiny imperfections; for instance, the pianist misses half a bar in the finale. Against this is the fact that the playing has the blessed spontaneity of a real performance, instead of suggesting the cruel jigsaw puzzle of the recording studios. The wonderful slow movement gains especially.

The work is spun out to a side and a half by playing both the repeats in the first movement, whereas the Santoliquido Trio play neither. But the latter find room for a major work on the back, Beethoven's "Kakadu" variations (and the Trio di Trieste for Mozart's E major trio), while the new Philips throws in only two short pieces which were recorded in the Sorbonne in Paris in October 1956. The Fauré is misdescribed on the label. It is not played by Casals as a 'cello solo, but by a group of ten specially chosen 'cellists with Casals conducting. The performance is beautifully sensitive, but I prefer this lovely piece as a solo. *Les Rois Mages* is a grave little piece which starts fugally on a theme like that of the E major fugue in Book Two of the "48". Again the playing is most sensitive, this time by an orchestra of one hundred 'cellos, though some tape noise intrudes on this last band. In the trio the piano tone sounds rather thin, though the balance is first-rate. R.F.

BRAHMS. Piano Quartet No. 3 in C minor, Op. 60. Ornella Puliti Santoliquido (piano), **Arrigo Pelliccia** (violin), **Bruno Giuranna** (viola), **Massimo Amfitheatroff** ('cello). D.G.G. Mono LP17180 (10 in., 22s. 3d. plus 7s. 3d. P.T.). Stereo: SLP135001 (11/59).

Aller, Hollywood Quartet (7/58) P8379

The mono version doesn't quite have the "air" round the instruments which makes the stereo so attractive, but it is a very good recording just the same. Indeed, in one detail I actually find it preferable to the stereo: I wrote in November that the climaxes of the Scherzo in stereo seemed slightly held back—in fact it was the violin which sounded rather distant—whereas here they have their proper force, and the effect is altogether satisfactory. The performance by this excellent ensemble is most musicianly and understanding, and with the possible exception of the *Andante* (which still strikes me as insufficiently broad and tranquil) is certain to earn the gratitude of all Brahmins and lovers of chamber music. As for comparisons with the Hollywood Quartet version on Capitol, this is (being on a ten-inch disc) cheaper as well as being superior in tone; and personally I like this reading a good deal better too. L.S.

DEBUSSY. Violin Sonata in G minor. Piano pieces. La plus que lente; Il pleure dans mon coeur; Preludes, Book 1, No. 12, "Minstrels".

FAURE. Violin Sonata No. 1 in A major, Op. 13. Jan Tomasow (violin), **Franz Holetschek** (piano). Top Rank Mono 35/010 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

Debussy Violin Sonata:
Ferras, Barbizet (10/54) LXT2810
Rostal, Horseley (7/57) CLP1124
Neveu, Neveu (11/57) ALP1520
Fauré Violin Sonata:
Fuchs, Balsam (2/57) AXTL1083
Ferras, Barbizet (4/59) ALP1666

The performers on this disc, and their names are new to me, are Czech-born Americans, and by and large they provide as acceptable versions of the Debussy and Fauré sonatas as are available. Ginette Neveu and her brother are considerably above their rivals in the Debussy, giving a performance such as one could hardly hope to hear again, but the quality of the record sounds very lame today. A similar situation obtains with regard to the Fauré; Fuchs and Balsam are outstanding, especially Balsam, but the hard, edgy quality on the violin (not of course his fault) makes the record almost painful to listen to. Tomasow on the new disc sounds a little toppy and hard too, though you soon get used to this, and as the balance is near-perfect and surface-noise non-existent, the sound is generally attractive. They are best in the Debussy, which floats along very stylishly. The Fauré is good enough for most occasions, though Holetschek cannot compete with Balsam in the warm romantic piano opening and neither artist sounds quite at home in the scherzo. Nevertheless I prefer them to the sweeter-sounding Ferras on the H.M.V. version, and the below-top-level price adds to the attraction of the record. So for that matter does the music. These are works I should like to have on one disc, the Debussy fascinatingly elusive (it was his last work) and the Fauré lusciously romantic and bulging with good tunes. R.F.

HAYDN. String Quartet in D major, Op. 64, No. 5, "The Lark".

RICHTER. String Quartet in C major, Op. 5, No. 1. Smetana Quartet (Jiri Novak, Lubomir Kostecky, Jaroslav Rybensky, Antonin Kohout). Supraphon Mono LPV393 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

The Smetana Quartet do not bring quite as much sympathy and understanding to Haydn's *Lark* quartet as they did to Mozart's C major reviewed last month, though they play it pretty well. The slow movement is played *andante*, whereas it is marked *adagio*, and the interpretation, to my ears, sounds a little superficial. The minuet, on the other hand, is too slow, and the trio noticeably unrhythmic. The first movement goes the best, and here there is a real grasp of the music with its wonderful shifting harmonies. The Richter quartet, on the back, is something of a novelty. F. X. Richter

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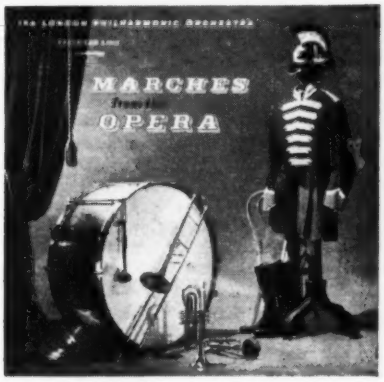


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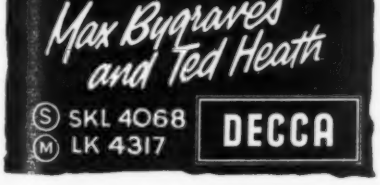
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(1709-1789) was of Czech birth, played the violin in the Mannheim orchestra from 1747 to 1769, and spent the rest of his life in charge of the music at Strasbourg cathedral. A concerto and sonata for flute by him have been in the catalogue for a year or two. The sleeve note remarks: "To appreciate his innovations (in the string quartet) to the full we must remember the amazing fact that he was born twenty-eight years before Haydn". The trouble is that we are not told at what stage in his very long life he wrote this quartet. If it really predates Haydn's earliest quartets, it is of real historical interest, but frankly it has not a great deal else to commend it. Haydn from the start could write Richter's head off in this medium. The vigorous contrapuntal finale is much the best movement, though it is also the most old-fashioned in style; the others are mildly pleasant, but very rambling in construction, and undistinguished thematically. The Smetana Quartet play the work pleasantly; they make the first repeat in each movement, which perhaps is a pity as the slight ideas barely stand repetition. R.F.

KUHNEL. Sonata for Viola da Gamba and Continuo No. 7 in G major. August Wenzinger (viola da gamba), **Gertrude Flügel** (viola da gamba continuo), **Fritz Neumeyer** (harpsichord). D.G.G. Archive Mono EPA37099 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.).

This beautiful performance of an unfamiliar work in an unusual style will give great pleasure to lovers of early chamber music. There was an August Kühnel at St. Thomas's Leipzig a year or so before J. S. Bach was born; but this composer of sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Continuo is a different person altogether. He was one of the foremost viola da gamba players of his time, and gave a successful series of recitals in London in 1685. A great enthusiast for French music of all kinds, Kühnel settled at the very pro-French court of Cassel, producing a set of 14 *Sonatas or Partitas for One or Two Viole da Gamba* in 1698. The first six of the set are trio sonatas and the remainder solo sonatas, and these eight are well in advance of Italian works of the time, for the solo gamba part is always completely independent from the bass continuo. Thus Wenzinger is justified in doubling the continuo with a second gamba, and the effect is wonderfully smooth and sumptuous, especially when multiple stops are featured as in the opening movement.

Kühnel often made use of a theme and variations as the central point of his suites and sonatas, and in this work, the seventh of the set, there are in fact two such movements. Both are short; one is an Aria and the other a Sarabande. The second movement, described on the index card as "Aria with Variation" is really no more than a melody with a *double* of the kind familiar to listeners from Bach's partitas. Fritz Neumeyer accompanies very expertly on a Neupert harpsichord, and in case you are worried about the rather flat G major, remember that pitch was lower in the seventeenth century than it is today, and the artists have tried to make due allowance for this. The balance of the three instruments is excellent. D.S.



INSTRUMENTAL

BACH. Organ Works. Preludes and Fugues: BWV543 in A minor; BWV544 in B minor†; BWV547 in C major; BWV546 in C minor (CLP1305). Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV548, "Wedge"*; Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV538, "Dorian"; Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV582; Prelude and Fugue in D major, BWV532 (CLP1306). Prelude and Fugue in G major, BWV541, "Great"; Pastorale in F major, BWV590. Chorale Preludes: "Herzlich tut mich verlangen", BWV727; "Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier", BWV731; "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross", BWV622§; "Ein' feste Burg", BWV720§; Fugue on the Magnificat, BWV733§; "Vor deinen Thron", BWV668a (CLP1307). **Fernando Germani** (organ). H.M.V. Mono CLP1305-7 (three 12 in., 77s. 3d. plus 25s. 1½d. P.T.). Recorded on the Organ of St. Laurens Church, Alkmaar, Holland. The records are available in a Presentation Box with analytical notes, and cannot be purchased separately. The item marked † is also available on 7EP7083 (5/59), that marked * on 7EP7088 (11/59) and those marked § on 7EP7085 (7/59). These records will not appear in stereo.

Two years ago H.M.V. issued a twelve-inch disc of Germani playing the three best-known of Bach's Toccatas, together with the great G minor Fantasia and Fugue (CLP1145), a disc favourably received by D.S. The three new discs find the same organist at the same organ, the wonderful Schnitger at Alkmaar, and they gather up various items from three small records issued in the intervening years and add a large quantity of music not previously available under Germani's name. Thus nearly all the best of Bach's longer organ works can now be heard on this organ and played by this organist, and though the three new discs cannot hope to do justice to the choral preludes (one side out of six is devoted to them), nevertheless the set provides a magnificent selection of music that should bring enormous pleasure to organists and non-organists alike. Bach, after all, wrote much of his very greatest music in this medium (of no other good composer can one say this), and to hear it played on one of the finest organs to be built in his lifetime is something not to be missed. I have not seen the analytical notes that go with the set, but Charles Enderby's sleeve notes for the recent small discs have been consistently good, and no doubt he will have had much of interest to say about all these works.

The first five of the six sides are devoted to the giants of the organ repertoire, two to a side, and there would, I think, have been room in the middle to separate them with a short quiet choral prelude to provide variety; as it is, sides average about 21 to 22 minutes. Germani is, however, at his best in the bigger works, and his rhythm seems generally tighter than it has sometimes been in the past. Much of the playing is of the very highest order, and I would especially commend the Passacaglia, the Preludes and Fugues in C major and minor, and the Toccata part of the *Dorian* Toccata and Fugue. These show a splendid grasp of the music and cannot, in my opinion, be faulted. There are very slight traces of hurrying in the fugue of the last-named work, as in that to the B minor, but the B minor Prelude is most beautifully managed and the organ sounds here at its best. I am not sure that Germani always chooses the best registration in quiet passages. Those who object to the squeakier Baroque sounds will be delighted to hear that there are very few squeaks on these discs, and generally speaking Germani tends to select his stops on rather conventional lines; the conventions not being Bach's. I would have liked something more adventurous (that is "ploppier" and more Baroque) in such passages as the quiet arpeggio variations in the Passacaglia, and even in the middle of the B minor fugue; certainly at the end of the Pastorale, beautifully though this is played. I must not exaggerate; this organ could not sound anything but of its time. But I do sense in the registration a certain compromise that smacks of conservatism, and you may take this as praise or blame, according to taste. In louder music there is nothing to take exception to, and the bite of *fortissimo* chords, and the way, with balanced choruses, left-hand passages can be made to tell in the middle of the harmony is tremendously exciting. As organists will know, the great continental organs like the one at Alkmaar have a "ruck" or "back" Positive, that is a separate organ behind the player's back and operated by the lowest manual. This, of course, tends to be nearer to the audience than the main "Oberwerk" or "Upper" part of the organ, and when the microphone is fairly near the organ, this difference in perspective tends to be emphasised. In the *Dorian* Toccata Bach actually marked his music with this effect in mind (it is impossible on English organs), and in this recording the antiphonal effects between "Positiv" and "Oberwerk" sound wonderful. Are they the least bit exaggerated by the near microphone? Does the smaller Positive organ sound too close? Never mind, the effect is superb. The organ is not of course perfect; what organ is?

There seem to me slight defects in the Pedal department. In loud passages the bottom octave has a different quality from the rest, and this is apparent in the final pedal passages in the B minor fugue. Not everyone will like the sound the pedals make in the first solo in the A minor prelude, and occasionally loud semiquavers on the pedals sound muddy. The fact that this is not always so suggests one particular stop may be to blame. But "blame" is the wrong word. This organ is in truth a fabulous creature, a nonpareil of instruments, and with Germani playing better than I ever remember some of the greatest music Bach wrote, this set of records is something worth saving up for. R.F.

BRAHMS. Piano Works. Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2; Capriccio in D minor, Op. 116, No. 1; Capriccio in D minor, Op. 116, No. 7. **Abbey Simon** (piano). Philips Mono SBF189 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.).

Sensitive and musical performances by the American pianist Abbey Simon, and he is realistically recorded. I thought two stormy pieces in D minor on one side might sound one too many, but in fact they complement each other well enough, and the warm, rich playing falls very pleasantly on the ear. R.F.

CORNET. Salve Regina. Flor Peeters (organ). H.M.V. Mono 7EP7092 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.). Recorded at St. Michael's Church, Zwolle, Holland.

Pieter Cornet wrote his "Versetten" on the *Salve Regina* in 1625 while he was organist at the Brussels Royal Chapel, and the following year he died. His music is said to have been influenced by that of Peter Philips and John Bull who were then living in exile in the Low Countries, and like that of Bull it is very variable in quality. Side one of this disc seems to me pretty dull, but in side two the music breathes with much more life, and the final section, called "Pro Fine" sounds splendid. The whole work can be found in a publication of 1938 edited by Flor Peeters himself and called "Oudnederlandsche Meesters". Since then the march of musicology has changed most of us, and Mr. Peeters now eschews his pedal parts and wisely plays all the music on manuals alone. The Schnitger organ sounds magnificent, and the recording is first-rate. R.F.

CHOPIN. Preludes, Op. 28, Nos. 1-24. Claudio Arrau (piano). Philips Mono GBL5503 (12 in., 16s. 11d. plus 5s. 7d. P.T.).

Gulda	(12/53) LXT2837
Rubinstein	(12/58) RB16110
Askenase	(9/55) DGM19002
Lympany	(10/55) CLP1051
Elinson	(5/59) CCL30112

I enjoyed a great deal of Arrau's playing of the *Preludes* but still feel that Moura Lympany's performance, as a whole, is the most musicianly and satisfying that has so far appeared. Arrau's superb technique enables him to do marvels with No. 10, which is as light and feathery as can be, and with No. 23, and his articulation of the notes in the rapid preludes such as No. 8 or No. 12 is wonderful, but in the playing of Chopin it is not technique one should be talking about—especially in the case of a great artist such as Arrau—but what the technique expresses—the poetry and passion of Chopin's music. Rubinstein's fiery and exciting playing of Nos. 8, 12, 16, 22, and 24 may be extreme for some tastes and they may prefer Arrau's very restrained performances of those numbers (but surely the introductory bars of No. 16 should not sound so tame?) and indeed this restraint is the outstanding feature of his performance. Poetry is present, especially in No. 13, but I do not feel it suffusing the whole work, or not to the degree that I personally like. In No. 2, which seems a trap for so many pianists, he certainly uses too much *rubato* and the music seems to limp along. The piano tone is the best that we have yet had.

I should like to have been able to write enthusiastically about Arrau's performance of the *Preludes* for he is an artist whose playing I greatly admire. There are, as I have indicated, treasurable moments here and there but not, I feel, the imaginative insight one had hoped for. It should be added that No. 14 is played, on Side 2, after No. 15, for what reason I do not know. A.R.

CHORAL AND SONG

BACH. Cantatas. No. 34, "O ewiges Feuer"; No. 56, "Ich will den Kreuztab gerne tragen". **Lorna Sydney** (contralto), **Hughes Cuénod** (tenor), **Alois Pernerstorfer** (bass), **Karl Mayerhofer** (oboe), **Daniel Pinkham** (harpsichord), **Vienna Chamber Choir** and **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Jonathan Sternberg.** Top Rank Mono 35/011 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

Cantata No. 56:

Ristenpart	(11/54) APM14004
Geraint Jones	(3/59) ALP1670

This is disappointing after Top Rank's fine issue last month of the 78th and 106th Cantatas, *Jesu, der du meine Seele* and *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* (35/008). It is true that the massive choral writing in *O ewiges Feuer* (Oh, Eternal fire) imperatively needs stereo to give it as spacious and uncongested sound as possible. As it is, one hears too much of the outer and too little of the inner parts. Both choruses are scored for three trumpets, oboes, strings and timpani. Sternberg uses the correct forces for the strings, 4/4/3/2/2, with an eighteenth-century *positiv* organ for *continuo*, but the desired clarity is not achieved. The fire, it should be said, is not that of the lower regions—the cantata has a text based on the Epistle and Gospel of Whit-Sunday and so alludes to the "tongues of fire" that came down on the Apostles. The music of all but the recitatives—which were newly composed—Bach adapted from a Wedding Cantata beginning with the same words. The final chorus is in the manner of an extended chorale and contains three blessings, "Peace over Israel, mankind and to you for ever". This chorus, being predominantly chordal, comes out much more clearly than the opening one. These choruses are well sung and accompanied, but the lovely and well-known alto aria, "Blessed ye hearts whom God has chosen" is sung by Lorna Sydney, who has a good voice, without tenderness and in an almost unvarying *forte*, and the accompanying is insensitive. The two flutes, the whole orchestral part, should sound much more flexible and persuasive.

Hughes Cuénod, in his brief recitative, copes well with a sudden top B natural on "Herr", but neglects both the appoggiaturas called for—strange in so excellent a musician. Alois Pernerstorfer, adequate in the other recitative, gives one little idea in the solo bass cantata, "I will my Cross-staff gladly carry", of the pilgrim on his way to the "beloved land". Like Miss Sydney he hardly ever varies his tone and one misses the vocal nuances and sensitive treatment of the text that so distinguished the performances of Fischer-Dieskau and Gérard Souzay in this lovely cantata. The conductor takes the aria, "Soon must my yoke be lifted from me", far too slowly (whereas the conductors in the other two recordings makes it dance along) the oboe is rather sour in tone and the player does not sound to be in the same class as the other two.

In the recitative about the journey over the sea to the Kingdom of Heaven the emphasis put on the first note of almost every figure played by the 'cellos gives the effect of a dotted note—which is wrong. This side of the disc is, I fear, a dead loss. A.R.

HANDEL. Israel in Egypt—complete. **Miriam Burton** (soprano), **Betty Allen** (contralto), **Leslie Chabay** (tenor), **The Dessoff Choirs, New York Symphony of the Air** conducted by **Paul Boepple.** Vox Mono PL11642: ★Stereo STPL511642 (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.).

Sargent (4/56) 33CX1347-8

I am not one of those who wishes *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah* had been scored by Rimsky-Korsakov or someone, and I welcome this gallant attempt to present the former work as Handel himself might have presented it. The choir is said to number 170, but sounds about half that size, and is altogether more direct and alive than the much larger Huddersfield Choral Society on the Sargent discs. Though the American choir is less glossily competent and is inclined to over-accent the beats in its striving for vitality, it at least achieves vitality, and there is something very engaging about this enthusiastic singing. The conductor, Paul Boepple, is a Swiss-born American citizen who seems to have made a corner in the conducting of big choral works in New York in recent years. Before leaving his native land, he was chief assistant to Jacques Dalcroze in Geneva, and conducted the world premières of Honegger's *King David* and *Judith*. The orchestra is what remains of Toscanini's N.B.C. Symphony and produces a rather more streamlined performance than the singers on these discs. The soloists have a poor time of it in *Israel in Egypt*. It comes as a mild shock to hear in the opening recitative the word "taskmasters" sung with short

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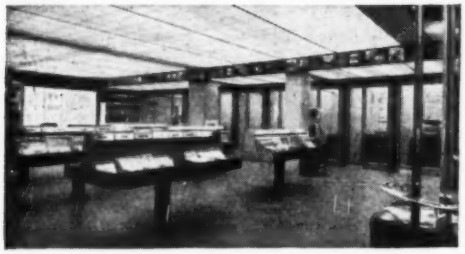
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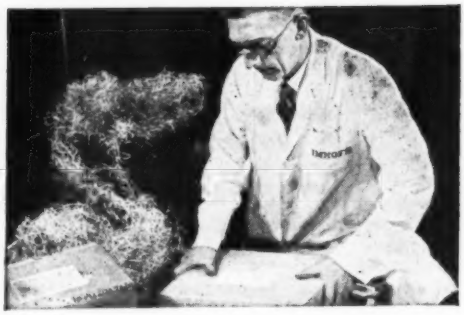
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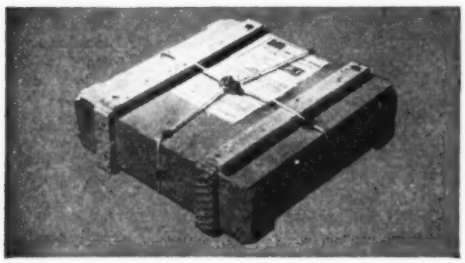


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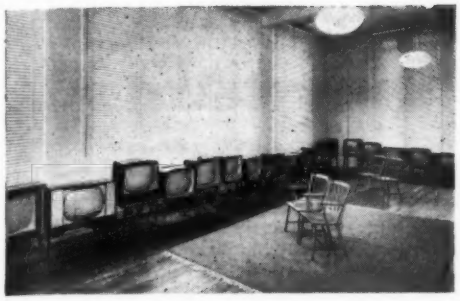
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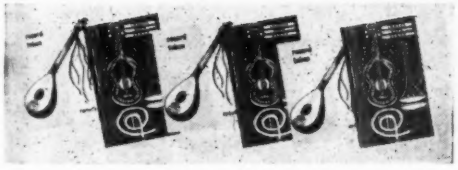
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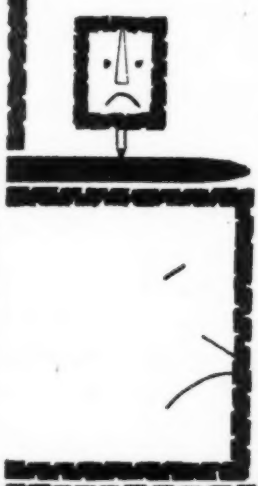
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American "a"s, but I was not otherwise worried by such things. The tenor cannot quite compete with Richard Lewis in the English performance, but the two women are not far behind their rivals, and all three sing well enough for me.

And then there is the music, and how to perform it. Sargent invents an overture, re-writes numbers whenever they don't fit his conception of the work (e.g. the end of No. 22), and rescores wholesale, thus depriving the horns, clarinets, etc., of the Liverpool Philharmonic of a few days off. The result is solid enough, but unexciting. The trumpets sound nothing much because there's such a lot of other wind music going on as well. Boepple thinks Handel knew best, with the result (as always with Handel) that every trumpet entry is a thrill. Goodness knows, this is one of the most fully scored works Handel ever thought up, with trombones in 13 choruses, drums without brass in "But the waters overwhelmed their enemies", flutes and oboes here and there and wonderful bassoon writing in "He sent a thick darkness". The scoring is near-perfect as it is; alterations are almost bound to be for the worse. Boepple uses harpsichord and organ continuo, adds trills in the right places, and double dots with fine effect, for instance in the orchestral accompaniment of "The people shall hear", though he should also have changed the "and" in "and be afraid" (bars 11 to 13) into a semiquaver, as also the first note of several dozen violin phrases in "The Lord is a man of war" (No. 22). He is also a purist in that he performs every note, including several numbers I never remember hearing before. I suppose this is a good thing, though *Israel in Egypt* is in truth a rather unequal work, and one or two pieces in my opinion are best left in limbo; No. 11, for instance, which Handel himself used to cut. Sargent omits this, 19, 21, 26, 31 and 32. Of these, the two duets (19 and 32) are well worth keeping, and not only as a foil to the plethora of choruses; the rest would perhaps be no great loss. Possibly because he wanted to get everything in, Boepple is inclined to hurry, and some of his *andantes* must be among the quickest on record (in both senses); Nos. 21, 24, 32 and 33 all seemed to me to warrant a fine for speeding. In 30 he makes the minim rests into crotchet rests, and occasionally the ensemble is cross-eyed, for instance in the soprano aria "Thou didst blow" (No. 29); the stereo version suggests that the singer and the 'cellos were so far apart that they could not hear each other.

On the whole, the balance is very good. There is not much directionalism about the choruses on the stereo discs because with so many double choruses there have to be sopranos, altos, etc., on both sides. On the rather rare occasions when Handel is thinking antiphonally, the seating arrangements pay dividends, and "The Lord is a man of war" (Boepple, like Sargent, makes it into a duet for his chorus basses) sounds very fine. But the general lack of directionalism where the chorus is concerned means that there is not as much advantage in having the stereo discs as one might expect. Sometimes the instruments hide the words of the chorus, but at least you can hear more words than you can from the mammoth Huddersfield Choral Society. The sound, as a whole, is not very mellow, but it has a directness and vitality.

There is, then, much to commend these discs, and I personally would much rather have them than the Sargent ones. They give you the music as Handel conceived it, the singing is delightfully fresh and enthusiastic, while the orchestral playing is tremendous; I remember in particular the violins in the "Flies" chorus, and the trumpets everywhere they play. I wish Boepple could phrase the music like Sargent, but then one might equally wish that Sargent had Boepple's respect for its style. R.F.

HANDEL. Messiah: Hallelujah Chorus. **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus** (Chorus Master: John McCarthy) conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart., C.H.** R.C.A. Mono 45RCA1162 (7 in., 4s. 9d. plus 1s. 7d. P.T.).

This is no doubt a foretaste of the complete *Messiah* which Sir Thomas recorded some months ago in Walthamstow. I hope it is not all like this! It is as if Sir Thomas had decided that those listeners who were whipped by the unHandelian score of his earlier H.M.V. recording should now be chastised with scorpions: with cymbal clashes aplenty, and shrieking piccolos, and the brass in full bay. The result is like a parody of the ordinary big-scale Handel performance. Sir Eugene Goossens prepared the edition! Besides, the recording is almost unbearable, bringing to mind the image of a magnet dipped in iron filings and emerging with its outlines blurred by a sharp, gritty fuzz. I should guess that it is a mechanically contrived artificial "resonance" that is responsible for the perpetual swarf that adds to the uproar. The Hallelujah Chorus goes at a spanking pace, with a steep *accelerando* as the finishing post comes into sight. A.P.

HANDEL. Messiah—excerpts. **Adele Addison** (soprano), **Lorna Sydney** (contralto), **David Lloyd** (tenor), **Donald Gramm** (bass), **The Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, Zimbler Sinfonietta** conducted by **Thompson Stone.** Decca Ace of Clubs Mono ACL-R67 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.).

Excerpts: Overture: Comfort ye my people: And the glory of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord: Pastoral Symphony: He shall feed His flock: Surely He hath borne our griefs: All we like sheep: How beautiful are the feet: Why do the Nations: Hallelujah: I know that my Redeemer liveth: Amen.

The Handel and Haydn Society of Boston have still a lot to learn about the way Handel's music is properly performed. The edition they use was made by Robert Franz in 1885 (in his later years Franz did a good deal of editing; he also refurbished the *St. Matthew Passion*). Franz drew on Mozart; the Bostonians have also added some Prout, and a harpsichord "to accompany some of the recitatives and in other places where it was deemed appropriate". The result has not got rings on its fingers and bells on its toes, like the Goossens reorchestration of the choruses reviewed above; and I must own to finding some of the wind writing in "And the glory" rather pretty. But the lack of cadential trills sounds ungrammatical; the harpsichord is hardly at all in evidence; and without harpsichord definition, the accompaniment to "He shall feed His flock" sounds very feeble, a drone limping on beside the voice.

This aria is taken far, far too slowly. The two soloists, especially the soprano, can barely sustain their phrases, let alone mould them. The sleeve-note, by one Cyrus Durgin, tells us that "if in this recording a dramatic style of performance is perceptible, such was intended". It is not perceptible to me. Adele Addison, who was also the soprano soloist of the Bernstein set on Philips, sounds blankly pure: Catalani may have been admired for her "chaste" style in this oratorio, but one feels that early nineteenth-century notions of chastity may have been looser than ours. David Lloyd, Philips soloist too, sings with style, but in tight tones. Lorna Sydney is ordinary and hampered by the slow tempo. Donald Gramm delivers his unattached recitative and the later aria with confidence, but somehow does not sound at all Handelian.

The selection is curious (Nos. 3 and 25 must be deleted from the LP catalogue listing). Both tenor and bass have a recitative without ensuing aria; and the bass's leads most unsuitably into the Pastoral Symphony. The choir sings well. The conductor's tempi, apart from the aria mentioned, are satisfactory; and a nice point about his performance is the very clear articulation of the quavers in "for the mou-outh of", etc. The recording, by Kapp of New York, is adequate. But for an abridged *Messiah* I still recommend the more expensive Decca disc, LXT5383—a better selection and far better performed. A.P.

MOZART. (*a*) **Missa Brevis in B flat major, K.275:** Kyrie; Gloria; Credo; Sanctus; Benedictus; Agnus Dei. (*b*) **Credo Mass in C major, K.257:** Kyrie; Gloria; Credo; Sanctus; Benedictus; Agnus Dei. (*a*) **Franz Tiller** (boy soprano), **Werner Krenn** (boy alto), **Erich Majkut** (tenor), **Walter Berry** (bass), **Vienna Boys' Choir, Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Rudolf Moralt.** (*b*) **Annelore Cahnbley-Maedel** (soprano), **Gertrud Schretter** (contralto), **George Maran** (tenor), **Walter Raninger** (bass), **Franz Sauer** (organ), **Salzburg Mozarteum Chamber Choir** and **Camerata Academica** conducted by **Bernhard Paumgartner.** Philips Mono A00367L (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Available to special order only.

These two very concise Masses, composed when Mozart had just entered on his twenties (1776/7) are performed in a brisk and generally businesslike way of which, no doubt, the Archbishop of Salzburg would have approved. The C major has some expressive phrases at "Et incarnatus est",

with odd *sforzandi* on the second vowels of "homo" and "factus", and a charming *Benedictus*, while the *Sanctus* begins with the theme, used elsewhere many times by Mozart and others, with which the last movement of the *Jupiter* Symphony starts. There is nothing prayerful about the *Kyrie* or peaceful about the final sentence of *Agnus Dei*. The *Missa Brevis* is a more appealing work. A solo soprano begins the *Kyrie*, set to a dance-like tune. and there is deeper feeling at the *Et incarnatus* than in the C major. Mozart allows in this *Credo* for the priest's intonations, which—I am glad to say—are given in the performance. The *Benedictus* opens with a touching soprano solo and there is a peaceful conclusion to *Agnus Dei*.

Both Masses are well sung and accompanied, with the B flat being given the best performance. The boy soprano is excellent and the other soloists, who are not given much prominence, are all good.

Dr. Paumgartner contributes a long note on the sleeve which contains a lot of useful information but is somewhat over-written; thus he speaks of "the cryptic tunes in the liturgical text (that) awake a gentle response in the mystic longings of (Mozart's) soul", which is as near nonsense as may be.

The recording gives a good balance and reproduces well the generally bright and festal character of the music in these two closely allied works. The "Credo" Mass, perhaps I should say, is so-called because of the constant repetition of the word in the creed—a fact of which Beethoven no doubt took note. A.R.

MOZART. Arias for Soprano and Orchestra. Ah se in ciel, benigne stelle, K.538; Vado, ma dove? O Dei!, K.583; Popoli di Tessaglia, K.316; Vorrei spiegarvi, Oh Dio, K.418; No, no che non sei capace, K.419; Mia speranza adorata, K.416; Nehmt meinen Dank, K.383. **Rita Streich** (soprano), **Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Charles Mackerras.** D.G.G. Mono LPEM19183 (12 in., 25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.). Stereo SLPEM136028 (11/59).

My high opinion of Rita Streich's singing on this disc has not, I have noticed, been echoed elsewhere but it remains unshaken, and will do so until, perhaps, Joan Sutherland, or someone else, challenges her performance. The mono recording does nothing to redress the poor balance between the voice and the orchestra. Too forward recording of the voice in these "hi-fi" days does not flatter it (or any instrument) and it is unfortunate that singers themselves do not appear to realise this obvious fact. They should insist that a better balance should be secured. D.G.G., one must say again, need particularly to take this matter to heart. A.R.



ROSSINI. Album de Musique offert par G. Rossini à Mademoiselle Louise Carlier. Rossini. Arietta. **Bellini.** Dolente immagine. **Paer.** Romance. **Bruguière.** Le printemps arrive (with Ester Orel, mezzo-soprano). **Panseron.** Il n'aurait pas du venir. **Tadolini.** Arietta. **Costa.** Trova un sol, mia bella Clori. **Marliani.** La gita in gondola. **Mercadante.** Aure amiche, ah! non spirate. **Morlacchi.** La Rosa appasita. **Meyerbeer.** Arietta. **Berton.** Air à trois notes. **Bertin.** Ah, dors en paix, mon bel enfant. **Cherubini.** Ariette. **Spontini.** L'adieu. **Onslow.** Le Dante dans le paradis. **Gordigiani.** Ognuno tira l'acqua al suo mulino. **Bazzini.** Chi ami? **Suzanne Danco** (soprano), **Francesco Molinari-Pradelli** (piano). Philips Mono A00427L (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). This record is available to special order only.

"In March 1835", the pamphlet bound up with this disc tells us, "Rossini made a gesture as distinguished as it was gallant: he presented Mademoiselle Louise Carlier, the daughter of a well-known Parisian impressario, with an album containing a number of melodies, all in original manuscript and all written by celebrated contemporary composers". This present was, however, directed more to the father than the daughter, Rossini being on very good terms with him during his difficult Parisian years, when Italian opera was flourishing in France. Natale Gallini, a well-known Milanese collector of musical curiosities, discovered the existence of this album quite by chance and in her account she says the event was, in her life, "comparable with the miraculous catch of fish mentioned in the Bible". That remark would, I feel sure, have tickled Rossini immensely.

Among the seventeen songs (out of more than twenty) here recorded are found the names, besides Rossini himself, of Bellini, who contributed "Dolente immagine" (recently recorded by Tebaldi), Paer, Costa, Meyerbeer, Cherubini, Spontini and Bazzini (whom we know only by his *Ronde des Lutins*). Natale Gallini provides excellent notes on the songs, with original texts and English translations, and the result is a perfectly delightful and intimate entertainment.

I particularly enjoyed Rossini's *Arietta*, Paer's *Romance*, a most engaging duet—*Ronde villageoise*—by Bruguière, Meyerbeer's and Cherubini's *Ariette*, Spontini's *Romance* and Bazzini's *Canto popolare toscano*; but there is not a dull item in the collection. Suzanne Danco sings the songs with lovely tone and distinguished musicianship and is ably partnered by Molinari-Pradelli, the well known operatic conductor. Ester Orel joins Madame Danco in the above-mentioned duet. The balance is excellent, the recording admirable and the album is delightfully got up, with the original cover reproduced on the outer cover of the disc, illustrations of the original manuscripts (very small) and of the singer and accompanist at Madame Danco's beautiful home near Florence, where the recording was made. A.R.

SCHUBERT. Lieder. "Die Forelle": "La Pastorella": "Die junge Nonne". **Erna Berger** (soprano), **Michael Raucheisen** (piano). D.G.G. Mono EPL30333 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.).

A dull little record of two great songs and a tiny charmer. The trouble is chiefly the prosy, unfluent accompanist, but also Miss Berger, an extremely mature artist who knows all about words, but whose little-girls voice and humdrum phrasing leave the songs where she found them. You don't need to make a drama of *Die Forelle* to move your listeners; but you have to sell *La Pastorella:* and *Die junge Nonne* is nothing unless you are made to see the anxious virgin waiting for the bridegroom Christ who will end her contact with a trifling world outside the cloister. If I hadn't discovered these points before, I wouldn't learn them from Miss Berger. Since I have done so (as you probably have), I wasn't interested in her singing. W.S.M.

ALFRED DELLER. Folk Songs. Annie Laurie; Drink to me only with thine eyes; Western Wind; Early one morning; Cockles and Mussels; The Miller of Dee. **Alfred Deller** (countertenor), **Desmond Dupré** (guitar), **John Sothcott** (recorder). Top Rank Mono JKP15/007 (7 in., 11s. 3½d. plus 3s. 8½d. P.T.).

Deller is not at his best in these folk-songs, and seems especially uneasy in *Cockles and Mussels*. The recorder obbligato passages are very painful to listen to besides being musically distracting. *Drink to me only* is most unfortunate in this respect. *Annie Laurie* has a very audible tape-hiss, and the acoustic does not by any means match that of the other two numbers on this side. D.S.

★**VIVALDI. Gloria in D major. Motetto a Canto—"O qui coeli terraeque". Friederike Sailer** (soprano), **Margaret Bence** (contralto), **Stuttgart Pro Musica Choir and Orchestra** conducted by **Marcel Couraud.** Vox Stereo STPL510390 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). Mono: PL10390 (5/58).

I remember deploring the shrill, hard, unsympathetic singing of Friederike Sailer in the motet for soprano and strings, *O qui coeli terraeque*, when the mono version appeared in May 1958. One would have thought that the intervening time might have enabled Vox to re-plan the stereo version, but all they have done is to omit the very tolerable performance of *Stabat Mater*. So all you have is the *Gloria* and the motet, totalling 33½ minutes or an average of less than 17 minutes per side. This seems a very bad bargain, especially as the stereo

is not particularly successful. *Stabat Mater* runs for just over 15 minutes, and is (as I have said) a tolerable performance, streets ahead of the motet. If the disc had been rearranged to include the *Gloria* and *Stabat Mater*, the average per side would have been in the neighbourhood of 20 minutes, still rather short but certainly more acceptable than the present pressing, which I cannot recommend. D.S.

WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL CHOIR. Bach. Jesu, joy of Man's desiring. **Vaughan Williams.** For all the Saints. **Morley.** Magnificat. **Gibbons.** Nunc Dimittis. **Anon.** St Anne: St. Clement: Vigiles et sancti. **Washington Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys** directed by **Paul Callaway.** Top Rank Mono JKP2003 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.).

The singing of Washington Cathedral Choir is a good deal less polished than I expected it to be, but there are pleasing elements of enthusiasm and forthrightness which almost make up for this disadvantage. The recording acoustic is not very spacious, and it seems that something of the cathedral atmosphere has been sacrificed to the cause of clarity. It is of course good to hear all the words, even if you know them by heart, but there is much to be said for a more distant balance in the recording of cathedral music. The Morley "Magnificat", it may be mentioned, is not an original work, but an adaptation. Canticles set for alternating plainsong and polyphony disappeared soon after the Reformation, and this one is something of a fish out of water, though it serves its purpose liturgically. D.S.

PSALMS. No. 23 (24): The Lord's is the Earth. With (a). Daniel (Ch. 3, vv. 52-6): The Blessings. Sung by Men's Choir with (b). 138 (139): O Lord you search me and you know me. 112 (113): Praise, O servants of the Lord. The Magnificat. 135 (136): O Give thanks to the Lord. With (a). Sung by Men and Boys of the **Choir of St. Edmund's College, Ware,** directed by the **Reverend Alexander Wells** with **Dom Gregory Murray** (organ) and (a) **Owen Brannigan** and (b) **John McHaffie** Grail Mono GR3-4 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.).

PSALMS. 83 (84): How lovely is your dwelling place. With (a) and (b). 125 (126): When the Lord delivered Sion. Canticle of Simeon. With (b). 102 (103): My soul, Give thanks to the Lord. With (a) and (b). 62 (63): O God, you are my God. With a section of the **Digby-Stuart College Choir.** 4: When I call, answer me. With (c). Sung by the **Choir of St. Luke's Church, Pinner,** with a section of the **Digby-Stuart College Choir** directed by the **Reverend Wilfred Trotman** with (a) **Theresa Marrow,** (b) **John McHaffie** and (c) **The Reverend Wilfred Trotman.** Grail Mono GR5-6 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.).

These two discs of the Gelineau psalmody show more professional polish and are better recorded than the previously issued ten-inch disc on which the English clerical voice, was somewhat obtrusive in those items in which the Downside monks took part, but is here absent.

The psalms are sung in direct, responsorial, antiphonal and alternate psalmody, in harmony and in unison. Trumpets and drums are used in "The Lord's is the earth" with fine effect. The soloists are excellent: Owen Brannigan even more patriarchal than before, the choral singing well disciplined, and the words commendably clear. Here, therefore, are many and various ways of singing the psalms, but there seems to be a danger, in the treatment of some of them, of the Gelineau psalmody becoming an art-form, and so rendering congregational participation impossible. It will not do if the congregation do no more than sing the most catchy antiphons and remain silent while the choir sings the psalms. This is precisely what happened in a broadcast account given fairly recently of a Liturgical Congress in France—I forget in which cathedral.

It is true that the congregational singing of the psalms would, by itself, not make an interesting recording, but one would like to have had a few of the psalms sung in this way, quite simply and straightforwardly, by an average parish church congregation, and it is to be hoped that the Grail will continue their good work with some examples of this to encourage parish priests, choirmasters, and congregations who may feel what is done on these discs is far beyond their powers. After all, the whole point of the Gelineau experiment is to restore congregational singing of the psalms. A.R.

OPERATIC

BIZET. Carmen—complete.

Carmen	**Victoria de los Angeles** (sop.)
Don José	**Nicolai Gedda** (ten.)
Micaela	**Janine Micheau** (sop.)
Escamillo	**Ernest Blanc** (bar.)
Frasquita	**Denise Monteil** (sop.)
Mercedes	**Marcelle Croisier** (sop.) / **Monique Linval** (sop.)
Dancairo	**Jean-Christophe Benoit** (bar.)
Remendado	**Michel Hamel** (ten.)
Morales	**Bernard Plantey** (bar.)
Zuniga	**Xavier Depras** (bass)

With Les Petits Chanteurs de Versailles and the Chorus, Maîtrise and Orchestra of the **French National Radio** (Chorus Master: René Alix) conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart., C.H.** H.M.V. Mono ALP1762-4 (three 12 in., 90s. plus 29s. 3d. P.T.).

Wolff (10/51) LXT2615-7
Cluytens (12/52) 33CX1016-8

I send up a loud "Olé". This *Carmen* wipes the floor with any other complete version I know including the old 78s. Where one sits through the others with suppressed irritation occasionally muttering "No, no", Beecham's sense of style, his impulse, the sheer swagger and "dog" of his handling of the score causes one again and again to exclaim "Yes, yes" and to jump up (and about) in a high state of excitement, flushed and smiling as if one were eight years old and this were the first time that Bizet had hit you (and not . . . but we needn't go into that). Occasionally one may disagree about a tempo but the instinctive rightness of the whole conception is simply marvellous. You may like "Là-bas, là-bas" or the Card Scene otherwise, but what Beecham in fact does, the finesse of the steering, so to speak, utterly convinces me. You may not think the soloists in the orchestra are always quite up to the level Beecham might expect but the total effect is very fine fingered and vivid. (This is a mono version, of which we may expect a stereo version later, but unlike some monos of what is also intended for stereo, it does not sound to me at all withdrawn or recessive, but vivid and bright right through all settings of the volume control.) The chorus is on its toes if not the best imaginable in quality; the Frasquita and Mercédès may have been picked for looks, but they are quite efficient. Mme Micheau sings Micaëla's music with feeling and the authentic idiom, managing a lovely "change" on the A flat in her solo and sounding the right person as far as voice-type goes. Ernest Blanc, whom I do not tire of praising, seems to me a very good Escamillo, with plenty of masculine weight and swagger—"Toreador", with Beecham to set the tone, seems to me the best, quite simply, since I used to stick my head down the horn and revel in Clarence Whitehill on a mauve-label soup-plate.

The surprise is Gedda, about whose Faust I was recently lukewarm. He makes Don José a very vivid character, singing with great freedom and a fuller measure of dramatic pathos than I have noted before. Beecham seems to challenge the artist in such a singer—and the results are both powerful and moving. His French, too, is heer most convincing.



Recording "Carmen" in Paris, September, 1959—Victoria de los Angeles, Victor Olof (E.M.I. Artists Department) Sir Thomas Beecham and Nicolai Gedda. [Photo: C. Peirer.]

The question which now cannot be put off any longer, the cardinal question, is, of course, what you think of Victoria de los Angeles? Has she, a Spaniard and a soprano, quite enough of the mezzo timbre so much of this music cries out for? The answer in my opinion is—yes. The Card Scene is not her best admittedly, she does not seem to relish the words here ("annonçant le bonheur") nor does she quite grip us with "Mais si tu dois mourir", as (say) Supervia does. All the same it was not until that scene in Act 3 that I was anything less than delighted with her Carmen. Purists will hear that seconds after coming on stage she sings "pre-fère" instead of "pré-fère" but the sound of her French is wonderfully more authentic than in her recent *Faust* (I can't think why, they must be contemporaneous or nearly so) and the recording is particularly happy in capturing that irridescence, a light, perfectly ringing timbre, in the upper reaches of her voice. She sounds young. The teasing grace, the half laughter, so vitally important, within the tone—these are deliciously used in the Habañera, the Séguedille, the exchanges with José. In the second Act she doesn't allow Beecham to out-race her in the *Chanson bohème*, holding her own in the *accelerando*. In the exchanges before and during the quintet (superbly sprung, of course, by Beecham) she is, for me, the real right thing, *à toute épreuve*. Her scorn in the "back to barracks with you" passage and her seductive "Là-bas, là-bas dans la montagne" convince me (I stress the personal, being a great lover of the singer's whole vocal personality, for I have already met a woman listener of fine judgment who was *unconvinced*). Among personal memories I fancy that I never heard anything quite so enchanting as the way, at Covent Garden in the early 1930's, Beecham steered Supervia into this passage (often so stodgily done). Here, in my view, he pulls off the same marvel—the thing begins, as it were, to *dance* long before most conductors can make the rhythm tell at all.

And the last act? (The third is very alive too, but with a Card Scene which is something less than a show stopper, it is Micaëla's, Escamillo's and Don José's, together with some fine bouncing choral contributions and a great effect of mountain perspective achieved). The fourth plunges straight in (I had half expected, without justification of course, that Sir Thomas Beecham would interpolate his lovely box of Bizet bon-bons there, but he does not). I am not sure that this short act taken as a whole is quite as thrilling as I can imagine: I've heard the chorus better, both at Covent Garden and in the H.M.V. version with Rise Stevens, though at least they sound authentically French here. The last terrible moments of the opera are a famous challenge to temperament in the protagonist. You won't get here Carmen the animal to the extent say that you got it with Maria Gay and Zenatello. Possibly, too, "Laisse-moi passer" needs a native French actress for full effect. But one is held by de los Angeles's tragic force too, even if it marks, as I think, a slight failure to improve on the wonderful vividness of the first two acts. Gedda as I said is very striking.

All in all, I find this *Carmen* superb and the more welcome since we have waited so long for gramophone justice to be done to Bizet's brilliant score. It is the hallmark of a masterpiece that when it is brought into contact with genius (Beecham's, I mean), it comes up as new as if poured out white-hot this very hour. This is a kind of gramophonic miracle which one never ought to take for granted. What a shock of pleasure is it when recognized.

P.H.-W.

DONIZETTI. Linda di Chamounix—complete.

Linda	**Antonietta Stella** (sop.)
Marquis of Boisfleury	**Renato Capecchi** (bar.)
Carlo	**Cesare Valletti** (ten.)
Prefect	**Giuseppe Modesti** (bass)
Antonio	**Giuseppe Taddei** (bar.)
Pierotto	**Fedora Barbieri** (cont.)
Intendant	**Piero de Palma** (ten.)
Maddalena	**Rina Corsi** (sop.)

With the Chorus and Orchestra of the **Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli** conducted by **Tullio Serafin.** Philips Mono A00423-5L (three 12 in., 90s. plus 29s. 3d. P.T.).

This should be given a welcome. The opera, as a fascinating essay in the handsome accompanying brochure by Leo Riemens reminds us, is not at all to be dismissed as a minor work of the master. It has in fact a good book and some strangely interesting features, such as the male-female role of the mountain lad Pierotto, to whom the tones of Mme Barbieri are lent, with an effect which has slowly gained my assent. Where in the matter of casting I fear the performance suffers is in the title role. I have always maintained that Mme Stella's voice was very beautiful in itself and I have admired her art too now and then, as in part of the complete *Traviata* Act 2 and even at times in the *Don Carlos* (though she can't really "touch" the final prayer). But it seems to me essential that *any* Linda should be able to make the aria with which she introduces herself in Scene 2, "O luce di quest' anima", a simple joy in itself, so that you would want to hear it again and again. But what do we get? We get a cautious, anxious, thoroughly pedestrian performance without mischief, élan, brio—even charm. (I'd love to see Tetrazzini's face!)

However, it would be absurd to allow such a cavil to put you off the rest and in the duetto with the tenor Valletti, for instance, "Da quel di che t'incontrai", we hear delightful singing from both parties, nearly but not quite on a Toti Dal Monte-Schipa level. Delights of a similar kind are scattered through this opera which, as Mr. Riemens points out, comes from what should have been the great upward sweep of Donizetti's cruelly truncated life. It was written for Vienna in 1842 and is consistently elegant and beguiling. I strongly recommend it to those who feel that we have more than enough of *L'Elisir d'amore* (of ten years earlier). Connoisseurs will see that the rest of the cast is of good average ability. All the same I think the promoters would have done better to cast either Miss Bronhill or Miss Studholme, not to mention Joan Sutherland, for the title role.

P.H-W.

GOUNOD. Faust: Jewel Song; Death of Valentine. **Maria Stader** (soprano), **Dagmar Naaff** (soprano), **Eberhard Wächter** (baritone), **Bavarian Radio Chorus, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Ferdinand Leitner.** D.G.G. Mono EPL30474 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.).

This disc is a dreadful warning to all those who believe that opera in the original is always preferable to the vernacular. It contains some ugly, clumsy, heavy, distorted French pronunciation which puts millstones round the vocalisation of the good singers. Miss Stader's doesn't get within striking distance of the style that ought, on previous evidence, to have suited her well; and Mr. Wächter, though he cannot sound dull, makes little musical impression as Valentine; there is nothing of urgency about his curse. The chorus remains firmly uncommitted to the events. W.S.M.

JANACEK. (*a*) **The Makropulos Case**—excerpts.

Emilia Marty	**Zdenka Hrncirova** (sop.)
Gregor	**Beno Blachut** (ten.)
Prus	**Teodor Srubar** (bar.)
Kolenaty	**Rudolf Asmus** (bass)
Kristina	**Milada Musilova** (sop.)
Janek	**Rudolf Vonasek** (ten.)

(*b* and *c*) **Jenufa**—excerpts.

Jenufa	**Libuse Domaninska** (sop.)
Kostelnicka	**Marie Steinerova** (m.-sop.)

(*d*) **The Cunning Little Vixen**—excerpt.

Forester	**Zdenek Kroupa** (bass)
The Little Frog	**Libuse Domaninska** (sop.)

Excerpts: (a) *The Makropulos Case*—Emilia/Gregor duet (Act 1); Kristina/Janek duet (Act 2); Finale (Act 3). *Jenufa*—(b) Kostelnicka's aria; (c) Jenufa's Prayer (Act 2). (d) *The Cunning Little Vixen*—Finale (Act 3).

(*a*) With the **Prague National Theatre Chorus and Orchestra** conducted by **Jaroslav Vogel**; (*b*) with **Janacek Theatre Orchestra Brno** conducted by **Frantisek Jilek**; (*c*) with **Prague National Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Milan Sachs**; (*d*) with **Janacek Theatre Orchestra, Brno** conducted by **Bohumir Liska.** Supraphon Mono LPV450 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This is a wonderful record, recommended without hesitation as an essential item in a basic library. Supraphon have already given us *Jenufa* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* complete; but here we have the very best passages from each opera, the *Jenufa* arias more beautifully sung, and better recorded, than in the complete set, the *Vixen* finale slightly less beautifully sung, but very well all the same. And for those who might have hesitated to embark on the full sets but, having heard them, would enjoy "highlights", the record is essential. So it is for those who already own the sets, since the whole of one side is given to three substantial excerpts from *The Makropulos Case*, not otherwise recorded.

The Makropulos Case is based on Capek's play about a woman whose father discovered a drug that prolonged life to 300

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conducted by **Alberto Erede**
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Tebaldi, Bergonzi
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Wagner

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S SXL 2184 M LXT 5559

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years; Emilia Marty has taken it. The recipe has disappeared together with the will which gives rise to the Makropulos case. Those who have seen the opera tell me there is rather a lot of legal wrangling; but the passages on this record are dramatic, passionate and lyrical. The first (Figure 102, page 47, of the vocal score) is a duet between Albert Mac Gregor—a descendant of Emilia Marty, and an inheritor under the missing will—and Emilia: a love-duet from his side (for Emilia retains her wonderful beauty through the centuries), a tender rejection from hers. The second duet (Figure 9, page 80), filled with charm and sometimes remininiscent of the Barbara/Vanya exchanges in *Katya*, is between two young lovers. In the Finale (Figure 112, page 181), Emilia Marty (who has also been Elian MacGregor, the famous prima donna, and originally Elina Makropulos), having revealed her secret, welcomes death. To the young Kristina she hands the formula for the life-prolonging elixir; Kristina burns it to ashes, and Emilia seems to crumble away and disappear. The thrill of this scene comes across very clearly in the recording. Hrncirova makes a fiery, passionate and commanding Emilia, but she has very ugly high notes (it is the sort of role that a young Welitsch could have done superbly). Blachut is splendid as (Mac)Gregor; and the young pair, Musilova and Vonasek, are charming.

The Kostelnicka's aria in *Jenufa* is that in Act 2 (page 139 of the vocal score), where she determines to sacrifice her hopes of salvation by murdering the illegitimate baby that is the obstacle to her foster-daughter's marriage. The child's father has refused to marry Jenufa; surely no one else will accept her, knowing about the child. Torn with love for the girl whom she has brought up so strictly, dread of the village where she is respected as a model of rectitude, and above all a sense of sin at the deed she is contemplating, she persuades herself that she is only leading the child to his Father's house; and eventually, in a kind of hysterical madness, rushes out into the night with the infant.

The next scene continues straight on (Supraphon have not attempted to "splice" the two recordings, made separately, with different orchestras). Jenufa wakes, still bemused by the sleeping-draught she has taken; finds her baby gone; cries out; comforts herself with the thought that the Kostelnicka has taken it to its father; and then prays to the Virgin for its safety. The music is of a tenderness and beauty that I can find no words to describe. Both Steinerova and Domaninska give intensely felt and moving performances, free from the squalls that disfigure Hrncirova's singing in the *Makropulos* excerpts.

The Finale of *The Cunning Little Vixen* is a wonderfully wise and deeply affecting scene; the Forester is musing in the wood; as he falls asleep the animals come to look at him; in his dream he recalls the vixen—and then the vixen's daughter, looking just like her mother, appears. The scene is filled with charm, and humour; with the most delicate and lovely music; with a Hans Sachs-like tenderness of feeling for human beings, sunset joy, memories of past youth, and content that other young people will come to enjoy the beauties of self-renewing nature. Zdenek Kroupa (the ripe Dikoy of the *Katya Kabanova* set) may not be so magical an interpreter of the scene as Rudolf Asmus, in the complete recording; but he is a very good one.

I hope that Supraphon may find it possible to produce a text-booklet to accompany the record, as they have for the excerpts from Novak's *The Lantern*. For this disc deserves the widest possible circulation. Despite its mixed provenance, the recording is unusually good. A.P.

MOZART. Zaide, K.344—complete.

Zaide	**Ruthilde Boesch** (sop.)
Soliman	**Erich Majkut** (ten.)
Allazim	**Walter Raninger** (bass)
Gomatz	**George Maran** (ten.)
Osman	**Richard Goetz** (bass)
A Slave	**Alfons Adam** (ten.)
Spoken Part	**Robert Dietl**

Lo Sposo deluso, K.430—excerpts.

Bettina	**Ruthilde Boesch** (sop.)
Don Asdrubale	**Erich Majkut** (ten.)
Bocconio	**Walter Raninger** (bass
Pulcherio	**George Maran** (ten.)
Eugenia	**Ruthilde Boesch** (sop.)

L'Oca del Cairo, K.422—excerpts.

Celidora	**Ruthilde Boesch** (sop.)
Lavina	**Eva Brinck** (sop.)
Auretta	**Karin Kuster** (sop.)
Chichibio	**Walter Raninger** (bass)
Biondello	**George Maran** (ten.)
Don Pippo	**Kurt Dichtl** (bass
Calandrino	**Erich Majkut** (ten.)

All with the **Salzburg Mozarteum Chamber Choir** and **Camerata Academica** conducted by **Bernhard Paumgartner.** Philips Mono A00396-7L (two 12 in., 60s. plus 19s. 6d. P.T.). These records are available to special order only.

Lo sposo deluso excerpts: Overture; No. 1 Quartet; No. 4 Trio.
L'Oca del Cairo excerpts: Finale.

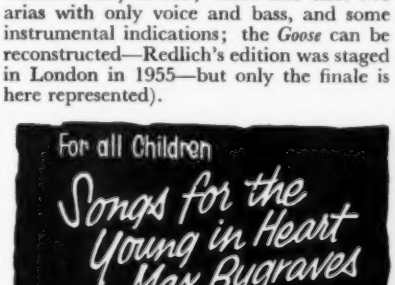
This is a somewhat tricky set to review. I think the performance of *Zaide* is a distinctly feeble one, yet I enjoyed listening to the records. Six and a half years ago I reviewed a Nixa recording of the opera, now deleted (with Mattiwilda Dobbs and Hugues Cuénod, conducted by Leibowitz); now that after the Mozart bicentenary year we know so much of his music, *Zaide* is even more fascinating to hear. It was composed in 1779, interrupted by the commission for *Idomeneo*, and never completed; in *Die Entführung* Mozart turned instead to a very similar subject. Gomatz, a captive in Turkey, falls in love with Zaide, a seraglio favourite; with the help of Allazim they escape, but are recaptured; the second act ends with each of them pleading for the other to be spared. Dr. Paumgartner does not know how the work was meant to end; but Professor Dent told us that Gomatz and Zaide turn out to be brother and sister, long-lost children of Allazim, and that the Sultan relents.

Paumgartner, in his introductory note, rightly points out that *Zaide* is a far more stormy, "expressionistic" work than *Die Entführung*. But this understanding does not extend to his performance. For example, in the E major Trio, while the characters are contemplating a rainbow, Zaide suddenly notices a fiery comet presaging disaster—and the orchestra plays fierce, menacing tremolos, and fiery woodwind streaks. A dramatic passage—but Paumgartner's handling of it is tame as can be. Ruthilde Boesch, the Zaide, is pipingly pretty in an insipid sort of way, without a consonant to her name, and quite inadequate in the fiery "Tiger!" aria. So "extremely" is *Zaide* composed that the heroine needs to be an Ilia and an Elettra in one: it would be pleasant if Joan Sutherland, in some future recital, were to give us the "nightingale" and "tiger" arias which follow one another.

The best singer here is George Maran, who sings Gomatz with pleasing tone, feeling, elegance of style, and most accomplished breathing (notice the long, long phrase at the end of his Portrait Aria, No. 4). Walter Raninger is a feeble Allazim, who first of all funks the big leaps (low B to high F) in his main aria, and later essays them in a half-hearted way. Majkut sounds rather more like Monostatos than the inflexible Sultan; and the Osmin, Richard Götz, should learn to laugh in music.

The score of *Zaide* is available now, in a new Complete Edition (Bärenreiter, Novello's in this country, 36s.). All the essential "gracing" of repeated notes is clearly written out above the score; the places where cadenzas are indispensable are indicated and Mozartian cadenzas are suggested. All this the singers ignore. The repeated notes which here close the phrases of the tenor's "Rase, Schicksal, wüte immer" (which is related to "Or sai chi l'onore"), and again those of his "Herr und Freund", sound simply ungrammatical (incidentally there is a charming effect in this last aria; the singer leaves, and then—like Don Basilio—returns for an unexpected final phrase). Miss Boesch leaves a great hole before the reprise of her "Tröstlos sucht".

Paumgartner's direction has a sturdy competence that provides enjoyable moments, but he never rises to the more exciting or more impassioned or tender moments of the score. The orchestra is far too much in the background: we must often deduce what it is doing from the score. Those who have the Nixa records (despite some drawbacks, a much more lively set, and more forwardly recorded) will not need this one. But it must be noted that more economical spacing has left room for excerpts from *L'Oca del Cairo* and *Lo Sposo Deluso*, those unfinished operas which were Mozart's false starts before he embarked on *Figaro*. (Of *Sposo*, we have here the three numbers fully scored; there also exist two arias with only voice and bass, and some instrumental indications; the *Goose* can be reconstructed—Redlich's edition was staged in London in 1955—but only the finale is here represented).



These excerpts are enjoyable. The Overture and quartet of *Lo Sposo Deluso* from a single number in A-B-A form, the second "A" being the quartet which opens as a reprise of the brilliant D major start to the opera; between comes a lovely 3/8 andante. The other number is a fine trio of perplexity. The Finale to *L'Oca del Cairo* is a remarkable extended number, with hints of the famous *Figaro* Act 2 finale, and also of the finale of *Die Zauberflöte*.

Everyone who takes more than a superficial interest in Mozart's music should try to hear these records, with the score. But they are available to special order only; and the quality of the performance is not really such as to give any assurance of lasting pleasure through continued hearings.

A.P.

NOVAK. The Lantern—excerpts.

Hanicka	**Libuse Domaninska** (sop.)
The Princess	**Marie Tauberova** (sop.)
Zajicek	**Antonin Votava** (ten.)
The Miller	**Vaclav Bednar** (bar.)
Michal	**Karel Hruska** (ten.)
Ivan	**Jaroslav Veverka** (bass)

With the **Prague Smetana Theatre Orchestra** conducted by **Frantisek Skvor.** Supraphon Mono LPM414 (10 in., 14s. 9d. plus 4s. 9d. P.T.).

This is a splendid example of the way excerpts from an unfamiliar opera should be presented. Though the record is only a 10-inch, with it there comes a separate libretto, containing an introductory essay, and the text (in English translation) of all the scenes included, set within a summarized narration of the rest of the opera. Ideally, I suppose, we should have had the Czech words as well; but we can't hope for everything, and given this full aid to enjoyment, we can make much more of Novak's opera than would be possible had we to deal with just a brief summary on the sleeve.

The Lantern was composed in 1921-2, and first staged at the Czech Theatre in Prague in 1923. The libretto comes from a nineteenth-century play; like many Czech operas, it is ideologically impeccable, and ends with the Princess abol shing serfdom. But it wears its "message" even more lightly than *The Devil and Kate*; and is a compound of humour, shrewdness, and even high romance. In the first of the five excerpts we meet the pretty Hanicka, singing a folk song; the village schoolmaster tells of his troubles; the Miller, a wise Hans Sachs-like character, gives him some bluff advice. It is charming, if unmemorable, music; the characters come to life. We move to the mill-pond, and meet two water sprites. Michael, a tenor with "a froggy voice", is hopelessly and grotesquely in love with Hanicka; he is plaiting the reeds with red ribbons in an attempt to win her favour. Ivan, the other water sprite, a rumbling bass, is disgruntled, for the local land-drainage scheme has driven him from his favourite haunt; he resolves to move to a lake near the Princess's hunting lodge and find some peace.

Alas for Ivan, the Princess has decided to visit the lodge (and it is the Miller's hereditary duty to accompany her, bearing a lantern); the villagers resolve to serenade her there, and present a petition. On the way, the sprightly, capricious Princess grows fond of the bluff Miller, and her music becomes more and more romantic. Almost he is persuaded to come to court with her —for she argues that thus he could help suffering people more effectively. With a magical effect (recalling the finale of *The Merchant of Venice*) the serenade begins in the distance during this duet. I need not go into the further complications; all ends happily.

It is not exactly distinguished music, but it has real charm. The romantic forest scenes are beautiful, and the music for the sprites is genuinely humorous. The singers are good; the Miller has a rich, fine baritone, the Princess a strong, warm, lyrical soprano, and Ivan a capacious bass. And the recording is one of the best Supraphon have made.

A.P.

PUCCINI. Tosca—complete.

Floria Tosca	**Renata Tebaldi** (sop.)
Mario Cavaradossi	**Mario del Monaco** (ten.)
Baron Scarpia	**George London** (bar.)
Cesare Angelotti	**Silvio Maionica** (bass)
A Sacristan	**Fernando Corena** (bass)
Spoletta	**Piero de Palma** (ten.)
Sciarron and A Gaoler	**Giovanni Morese** (bass)
A Shepherd Boy	**Ernesto Palerini** (boy sop.)

With the Chorus and Orchestra of the **Santa Cecilia Academy** (Chorus Master: Bonaventura Somma) conducted by **Francesco Molinari-Pradelli.** Decca Mono LXT5554-5: ★Stereo SXL2180-1 (two 12 in., 57s. 6d. plus 18s. 9d. P.T.).

Mono:

Erede	(11/52) LXT2780-1
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Sabata	(12/53) 33CX1094-5
Leinsdorf	(3/58) RB16051-2

I wonder if, with these gorgeous new Decca opera issues which we are getting, designed for mono and stereo and engineered with immense calculation, other listeners are finding, as I am, that one must take an infinity of trouble to get the volume level set at exactly the optimum loudness? A fraction below that optimum, I find that the performance, though patently a good one, is distant out of all proportion (or out of proportion to what one would expect, being used to previous recordings where, if you turned the volume down, the music was just less *loud*, not distant). Unless one gets it right, one is either too much in the picture, or out of it, as though at La Scala you were locked in the cloakroom, frantically aware you were missing what you still could hear. Get it just right and you have a seat in the exact middle of the third or fourth gallery, even one on the chandelier at times.

The recording seems to me a very good one. I enjoyed it *and* the performance recorded. I will try to answer some of the questions which I myself should want answered about a new *Tosca*.

Does the orchestral palette sound sufficiently rich? Yes. Does the conductor extract the maximum *volupté* out of the love music? Yes, but he does not in my opinion get half enough tension into such things as the torture scene ("più forte, più forte"), into the riproaring round-the-table chase, into the uncannily ironic tune of waiting while Tosca is being asked if Scarpia is to prepare the safe conduct via Civitta Vecchia. Similarly, that other tune of waiting during the preparations for the mock execution in Act 3. I think De Sabata got more out of these than Molinari-Pradelli. On the other hand the poetry of the Roman dawn is beautifully done and one feels that, if he does not challenge them, this conductor at least gives the singers every chance. Do they take their chances? I thought Tebaldi very fine at first. No virago, this Tosca, but voluptuous, sensuous, affectingly human in her devotion, her piety, her flashes of anger. I can't say I think she out-acts Callas in the scene where the latter so remarkably seems to create absolutely anew Tosca's admission to Scarpia that she is indeed anxious. (The latter's histrionic edge there was amazing.) But Mme Tebaldi's vocal security is very satisfying.

In the second act Tebaldi spins a lovely line in "Vissi d'arte"; some of the most beautiful singing she has ever committed to record I would say, and well up in the Destinn class than which no praise could surely be higher. But she does not, on resuming, get the whole effect of "Vedi . . ." ("see me at your feet weeping"). In the attempted rape scene, she lets fly once or twice in rather gruff *parlando*, and yet when it comes to "Avanti lui tremava tutta Roma" she intones it (whereas every other Tosca I've ever heard *spoke* it).

In the third act, her performance is very like the earlier version of 1952—the same not always very exciting assurance and the duet with Del Monaco does not surprise you with the little touches of wistfulness which some Toscas manage to bring out. It is a very full-throated affair as you would guess (before it was with Campora). Del Monaco is in fine voice as Cavaradossi; such things as his defiance in Act 2 ("Vittoria . . .") make the expected prodigious effect but for the two famous solos he is not as attractive an artist as some others. He *does* try for some *dolce* effects, one of them in "E lucevan", aided quite audibly, it seemed to me, by dimming him willy-nilly from the control room; but he does not sound really happy till he has broken back into his full voice. This is a robust Cavaradossi and one must not expect everything. He puts a lot of feeling into it and there are good *legatos*, though not innately sensitive ones. I liked the push of emotion on the words "al mondo" ("what eyes in all the world") in the first act duet. The singing of "Recondita armonia" is spacious, noble in a savage way. George London, as Scarpia, is the one non-Italian, and this is a very well studied performance in which some of the dark tones of his voice are used with sinister effect, but I would not put it as among his best recorded roles. The recording is all right, but the conductor does not help him to carry all before him in the famous cantabile, which goes rather sluggishly. There, the relish of the words is not as telling as in the mouths of some Italian baritones. It is a young-sounding voice, without any dead or woody notes in it, but the vocal presentation of the role seemed to me lacking in the final refinements of villainy; the ironies and the insinuations. But the effect of weight is very

impressive at the end of the Church Scene, where recording such as this most wonderfully captures Puccini's intention—it gets bigger and bigger, growing to thunderous power without any coarsening or confusion; in a word, this first curtain in stereo especially "overwhelms".

Perhaps I have not used words of that kind often enough about this fine set. I ask you to believe that in a first review, on comparatively short acquaintance with the records and beset by so many comparative versions, it is very difficult to give rein to one's enthusiastic enjoyment while trying to remain an honest judge. If you came on this set without the long backlog of critical memories, there is no doubt you would often be overwhelmed by it. For me, it is a shade less keen on the nerve and absorbing than this or that moment in other versions. But, as a whole, it must be given and shall get an ovation. P.H-W.

★**SAINT-SAENS. Samson and Delilah**—excerpts. **Mario del Monaco** (tenor), **Ezio Flagello** (bass), **Rise Stevens** (mezzo-soprano), **Clifford Harvuot** (bass), with the chorus and orchestra of the **New York Metropolitan Opera** conducted by **Fausto Cleva** (Chorus-Master: Kurt Adler). R.C.A. Stereo SB2052 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). Mono: RB16160 (9/59).

Excerpts: Arretez, O mes freres!; Amour! Viens aider ma faiblesse; En ces lieux; Mon coeur s'ouvre a ta voix; Vois ma misere; Gloire a Dagon vainqueur.

Though the mono version of these excerpts from *Samson*, ranging from the stodgy to the voluptuous did not distort on my equipment, I have subsequently heard the disc played on equipment on which it did distort badly in places. The stereo version shows up the solo singing (and dubious French accents) in a far from flattering light. I maintain, however, that Miss Stevens is a most conscientious artist and makes a really heroic attempt to give us a semblance of a French Delilah. Mario del Monaco's Samson is a bit too much of a good thing—and comes nowhere near the genuine dignity of this loud singer's Otello, for instance. The choral parts are prosaic-sounding.

P.H-W.

SULLIVAN. H.M.S. Pinafore—complete.

The Rt. Hon. Joseph Porter, K.C.B. **John Reed** (bar.)
Captain Corcoran **Jeffry Skitch** (bar.)
Ralph Rackstraw **Thomas Round** (ten.)
Dick Deadeye **Donald Adams** (bass)
Bill Bobstay **George Cook** (bass-bar.)
Bob Becket **Wilson Hyde** (bass-bar.)
Josephine **Jean Hindmarsh** (sop.)
Hebe **Joyce Wright** (cont.)
Little Buttercup **Gillian Knight** (cont.)

With the **D'Oyly Carte Opera Chorus** and **New Symphony Orchestra** (Chorus-Master: W. Cox-Ife) conducted by **Isadore Godfrey.** Decca Mono LK4334-5; ★Stereo SKL4081-2 (two 12 in., 51s. 6d. plus 16s. 9d. P.T.).

Mono:

D'Oyly Carte Opera Co.	(11/50) LK4002-3
D'Oyly Carte	(12/55) ALP1293-4
Sargent	(1/59) ALP1650-1

In January 1959 I plumped for the then new H.M.V. recording of *H.M.S. Pinafore* conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent as the most generally desirable choice but ended by querying how soon it would be before it was challenged by one by the D'Oyly Carte Company from Decca. Here it is, in both stereo and mono but it is not a strictly parallel alternative, about which I am rather glad.

Here for the very first time we have a Savoy opera which includes dialogue. This takes away any feeling of listening to a concert performance but on the other hand it compels us to listen to the dialogue every time we hear the records, and greatly as Gilbert's libretti are to be admired and witty as is much of the dialogue, it is surely Sullivan's music far more than Gilbert's books that have kept these operas alive and on the stage for so many years.

Already after half a dozen hearings I begin to find myself wishing for the next lyric before the end of the more extended passages or dialogue, and I fear that this tendency will grow with each hearing. I suppose the fact is that well as I know *Pinafore*, and am so able to visualise scenes and situations, the addition of actual sight is needed to get the best from the dialogue; much more so than to get the best from the songs. That many may find it otherwise I accept, I am here only expressing personal reactions and opinions, though I think that they will be shared by many.

For the performance itself I have little but praise. Vocally it is substantially better than are any of the more recent D'Oyly Carte recordings and Isadore Godfrey secures better work from both orchestra and chorus. He probably felt that the first recording with dialogue was an "occasion", and it may well be that he has been influenced by the recent competition from the Sargent recordings. It must be hard indeed to be consistently on your toes in the same small handful of works. Whatever the reason, this *Pinafore* is the best performance he has given us, I think, and it is heard at its best in stereo although the mono version is excellent within its self-imposed limitations.

To sum up: this is unchallenged as a complete performance but those who, like me, feel that with constant repetition the dialogue may become tiresome, are recommended to the excellent Sargent discs. A good spot for sampling the new release is the beginning of the second side which gives the scene in which Sir Joseph Porter boards Captain Corcoran's ship and subsequently sings his famous song of how he rose to be Ruler of the Queen's Navee.

W. A. CHISLETT

STRAUSS, J. Eine Nacht in Venedig: Finale, Act 1; Finale, Act 2; Lagoon Waltz; Pigeons' Chorus. **Dorothea Siebert** (sop.), **Ruthilde Boesch** (sop.), **Waldemar Kmentt** (ten.), **Rudolf Christ** (ten.), **Valerie Zörner** (cont.), **Kurt Preger** (bar.), **Vienna Chamber Choir** and the **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Rudolf Moralt.** Philips Mono ABE10123 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.).

There are some famous numbers in *A Night in Venice*, and of these the serenade, "Komm in die Gondel" and "Ach, wie so herrlich" are on the Philips EP; here also is another serenade, to Paul Heyse's words, "Der Mond hat eine schwere Klag erhoben" (students of Hugo Wolf know them), as well as a chorus with zither accompaniment and pigeon cooing noises. The singing is only moderately enjoyable (not up to the Columbia set), but if you want less than two discs and more than the two famous songs, well here you are.

W.S.M.

HUMOROUS

STANLEY HOLLOWAY. *Oh! I must go home tonight; Sweeny Todd the Barber; I live in Trafalgar Square; My word, you do look queer.* **Stanley Holloway.** Philips Mono BBE12326 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.).

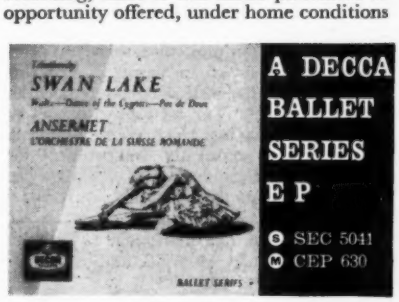
A new record from Stanley Holloway is always something of an event. He has never allowed his work to be plugged, and his songs always bear his own individual stamp. Nobody else could do it like this. Three of these songs are really no more than pot boilers, and the Sweeney Todd—topical in view of the two current productions (musical and balletic) of the old tale—will send old readers back to the Todd Slaughter records in the Regal series of transpontine drama. But connoisseurs will relish *My word, you do look queer*. This is vintage Holloway, funny and superbly delivered; a small masterpiece, which I hope will find its way on to a "single".

R.W.

POETRY AND DICTION

ROBERT DONAT. *Poetry Reading.* **W. Wordsworth.** On Westminster Bridge. **John Keats.** Bright Star; La Belle Dame sans Merci; Ode to Melancholy; Ode to Autumn. **Rudyard Kipling.** The Way Through the Woods. **Robert Bridges.** Nightingales. **T. S. Eliot.** Gus, the Theatre Cat. **Wilfred Owen.** Greater Love; Futility. **Whan Chei.** Stone Fish Lake. **Robert Browning.** Ring and the Book (extract). **Shakespeare.** "Dirge for Fidele" from Cymbeline. **Anon.** Early Carol. **Thomas Hardy.** The Oxen. **T. S. Eliot.** Journey of the Magi. **J. Alexander Chapman.** Christus Natus Est. **Walter de la Mare.** Before Dawn. **John Betjeman.** Christmas. **Hilaire Belloc.** Noel. **Shakespeare.** "When Icicles Hang" from Love's Labour Lost. **J. Watts-Dunton.** Wassail Chorus. **Shakespeare.** "Christmas Cockcrow" from Hamlet. **Anon.** Two Epitaphs. **Jill Furse.** Carol. Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. Read by **Robert Donat.** Argo Mono RG192 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This is a precious record. Had Robert Donat lived he would undoubtedly be contributing much to the present activity in poetry recording. As it is we are left with this memorial volume, together with his playing in *Murder in the Cathedral* and his narrating in Alan Rawsthorne's musical version of T. S. Eliot's *Practical Cats*. In an introduction on the sleeve Argo apologise for the variations in the quality of the recording, since it was made piecemeal as opportunity offered, under home conditions





Robert Donat

and towards the end of the actor's life. Actually nobody need be put off buying this record from any technical failure; the only bad patch is *Gus, the Theatre Cat*, and even this comes through well enough. Donat loved poetry, and he loved speaking it. That he did it supremely well is evident, and all these poems are delivered with love. It is a fascinating anthology, and there will be many a Christmas to come when the second side will be played in homes all over the world. As a single example of interpretative genius the Kipling poem, *The Way Through the Woods*, is a revelation. The two poems by Wilfrid Owen remind us that there is still no recording of Sir Arthur Bliss's epic *Morning Heroes*, save the old Decca 78 of Basil Maine reading Owen's *Spring Offensive*. R.W.

EMLYN WILLIAMS. Emlyn Williams Talks. London Portrait of a Londoner, 1940. North Wales: Portrait of a Welshman. His Childhood: Presidential Speech at the National Eisteddfod, 1952. Budapest: A visit to the frontier, November, 1956. **Emlyn Williams.** Qualiton Mono QLP1004 (12 in., 30s. 0½d. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

This record, "made in Wales" according to the sleeve and "in England" according to the label, is an uneconomic buy outside the Principality, since a quarter of it is in Welsh, and another quarter, though spoken in English, is an extravagant evocation of that country. Mr. Williams has given us some classic records, notably his great Dickens readings, and his gift as a writer and speaker must be obvious to all. The wartime postscript to the B.B.C. News, on a London charwoman, is both brilliant and moving. It is as taut as the story of the Welsh peasant is loose, though this, too, contains wonderful moments; it is just too long by three minutes, and three minutes matter to an artist in words. I cannot evaluate the Eisteddfod piece, but the Hungarian sketch is a fine example of descriptive reporting. For Welsh admirers this record is naturally important; for others I can only say that I have played the first band repeatedly. R.W.

"THE GRAMOPHONE" CLASSICAL LP CATALOGUE see page 404

CLASSICAL REISSUES

ORCHESTRAL

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM. *On hearing the first cuckoo in Spring* (Delius). **R.P.O.** H.M.V. Mono 7P231 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). From DB6923 (9/49).

This reissue of *The First Cuckoo* seems to me poorly judged. It comes from a record that appeared as long ago as September 1949, whereas there is a much more recent recording under Sir Thomas which H.M.V. could have put out on its own (from ALP1586). And 6 minutes or so of music isn't much, even for 6s. 11½d. T.H.

PAUL PARAY. *Symphony No. 2* (Schumann). **Detroit S.O.** Mercury Mono MMA11065 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). From MRL2519 (10/56).

When A.P. originally reviewed Paray's recording of Schumann's Second Symphony I don't feel he gave him quite enough credit for the extreme refinement of the orchestral playing. The strings are beautifully in tune and their phrasing splendidly unanimous; every accent is perfectly in place. Moreover the sound of the recording, which he found steely and unnatural, seems to have been warmed up a little in this new transfer, though it is still a little on the dry side. On the other hand I have to admit that Paray's whole approach is too elegant, too polished, even dapper, to give us the real flavour of Schumann's music. The heart does need to be worn a little nearer the sleeve than this, I'm afraid, but nevertheless this is a distinguished performance that may well appeal to those who find most Schumann performances over-sentimental. J.N.

GEORG SOLTI. *La Boutique Fantasque* (Rossini-Respighi): Overture; Tarantella; Mazurka; Danse Cosaque; Can-Can; Valse lente; Nocturne; Galop. **Israel P.O.** Decca Mono BR3014 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT5341 (10/57).

JEAN MARTINON. *Giselle* (Adam): Entree joyeuse; Loys est reste seul; Retour des vendangeurs; bis—Valse; Pas de deux; bis—La Chasse; Marche des Vignerons; Galop general; bis—Scene Finale; La Halte des Chasseurs; Apparition et scene de Myrtha; Apparition de Giselle; Allegro moderato Entree de Loys et Wilfride; Scene des Wilis; Grand pas de deux—Variation de Loys; Finale, Act 2. **Paris Cons. Orch.** Decca Mono BR3016 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT5515 (7/59).

JEAN MARTINON. *Les Patineurs* (Meyerbeer): Entree; Pas seul; Pas de deux; Pas de trois; Duet; Pas des Patineurs; Finale. *Le Cid* (Massenet): Castillane; Andalouse; Aragonaise; Catalane; Madrilene; Navarraise. **Israel P.O.** Decca Mono BR3015 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT5456 (12/58).

ERNEST ANSERMET. *Swan Lake* (Tchaikovsky): Introduction; Opening Scene; Valse; Danse du Prince; Sujet; Danse des Coupes, Act 1; Scene; Tempo di Valse; Pas de deux; Scene, Act 2; Allegro giusto, Act 3. **Suisse Romande.** Decca Mono BR3011 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT5501-2 (4/59).

ERNEST ANSERMET. *Casse Noisette* (Tchaikovsky): Overture; March; Divertissement; Chocolate; Tea; Trepak; Waltz of the Flowers; Pas de deux; Tarantella; Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy; Coda; Waltz and Apotheosis. **Suisse Romande.** Decca Mono BR3012 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT4593-4 (4/59).

FERENC FRICSAY. (a) *La Traviata* (Verdi): Preludes to Acts 1 and 3. (b) *Eugene Onegin* (Tchaikovsky): Waltz. **Berlin Radio S.O.** D.G.G. Mono EPL30494 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). (a) from DG17015 (11/56), (b) from DGM19116 (11/58).

All the Decca ballet selections are contained in the new series which in no way differs from the LW one save in label (it was an export-only series which has suddenly found itself available here too). The source discs are all famous. **Solti's** *Boutique* is high-powered and sounds marvellous. **Martinon's** *Giselle* excerpts are often rather quick in tempo, and the orchestral playing is less fluent than that of the Israel band in the dazzling *Patineurs/Le Cid* coupling. These suites are accommodated on ten-inch instead of twelve by the omission of one number from each. The **Ansermet** *Swan Lake* concentrates on Acts 1 and 2, but includes the C minor variation for the Prince in what we call the Black Swan *pas-de-deux*. Side two is a little misleading, since it promises No. 14, Scene (the end of Act 2) but omits it. The disc *does* contain the big waltz from the first Act, the other waltz ("Sweet Rosie O'Grady"), the big supported solo for Odette with solo violin and 'cello (the violin solo poorly played), as well as other enjoyable movements; and the procession at the start of Act 3 rounds off the selection. This is *not* the accepted suite, but it is a good anthology. Equally **Ansermet's** *Nutcracker* disc contains rather more than the usual suite—the full *pas-de-deux*, for instance.

Fricsay's operatic excerpts are nicely played; but how unprofitable to have the two *Traviata* preludes juxtaposed! Their similarities are spotlit, but the essential differences, which make the last Act prelude so moving, can't be appreciated out of context. W.S.M.

ANTAL DORATI. *Swan Lake Ballet* (Tchaikovsky)—complete. **Minneapolis S.O.** Mercury Mono MMA11074-6 (three 12 in., 86s. 3d. plus 28s. 1½d. P.T.). From MRL2528-30 (8/57).

ERNEST ANSERMET. *Coppelia* (Delibes): Prelude; Valse; Theme slave varie; Czardas; Scene et Valse de la Poupee; Scene; Bolero; Gigue; Marche de la Cloche; Valse des Heures. **Suisse Romande.** Decca Mono BR3013 (10 in., 15s. plus 4s. 10½d. P.T.). From LXT5342-3 (11/57).

A warm welcome to **Dorati's** extremely important *Swan Lake* on its return to the catalogue. This is the only complete recording of Tchaikovsky's original score (what is usually referred to as the Russian score, though a similar one is published in America). Here are all the extra numbers, the Russian Dance, the Gnomes, etc., all in their right places, and several of the familiar dances are given at fuller length than we are used to hearing. I suggest that every serious ballet-going collector ought to possess these discs. They sound very clear and airy; but I had groove-jumping trouble in the Black Swan Adagio, No. 5a. Dorati is an inspired conductor of this music, and his band plays well; I particularly like Rafael Druian's violin solos.

The *Coppélia* highlights are part of a series more fully considered in another column. They come from a complete recording by **Ansermet** that I treasure and play often. The selection is sensible and includes all the plums from the first two acts as well as the waltz from the concluding masque. If you want the Prayer or the final gallop, you must look elsewhere; otherwise this is a very attractive ten-inch selection. W.S.M.

FREDERICK FENNELL. *Suite No. 2 in F major, Op. 28b; Suite No. 1 in E flat major* (Holst). *English Folk Song Suite; Toccata Marziale* (Vaughan Williams). **Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble.** Mercury Mono MMA11063 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.) From MRL2001 (6/56).

The two Holst suites, and the Vaughan Williams *Toccata Marziale* and *English Folk Song* Suite are the classics of the British military band repertory, written in the days of its heyday. In this record, an indispensable American contribution to the British

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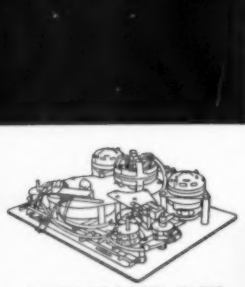
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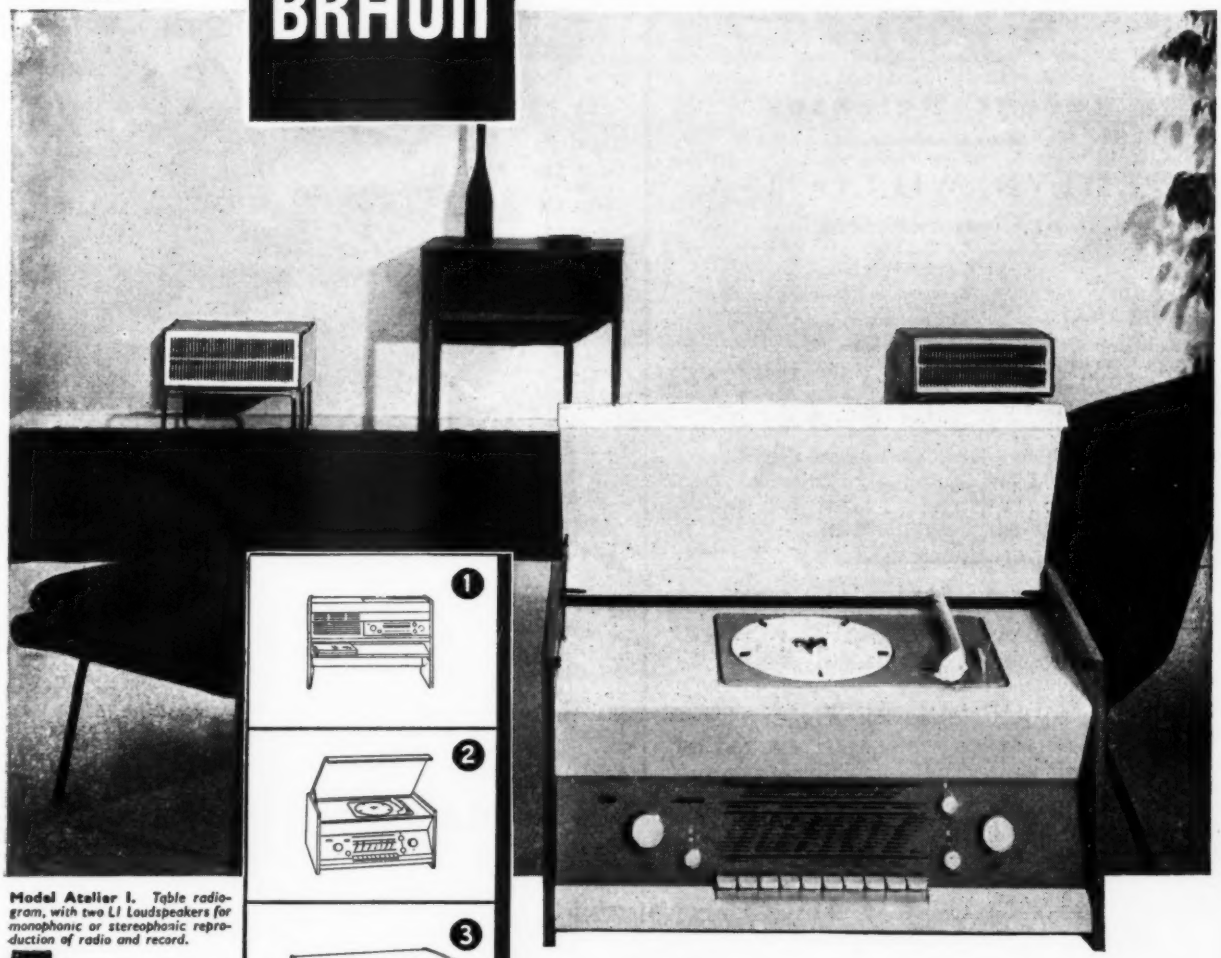
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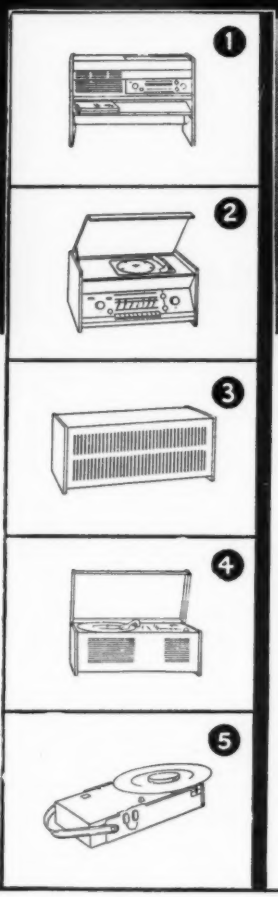
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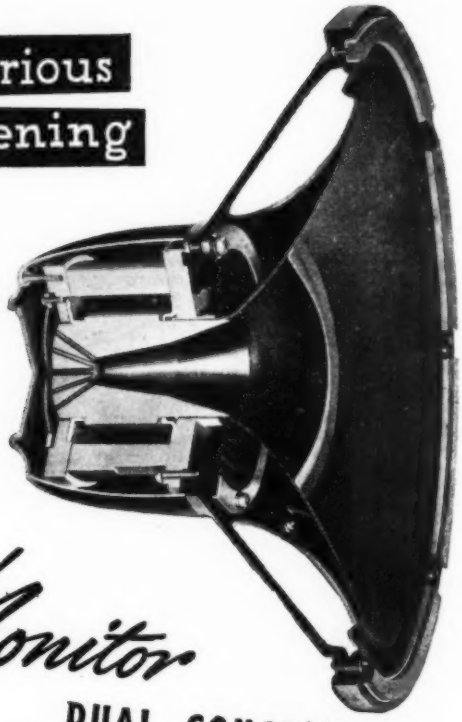
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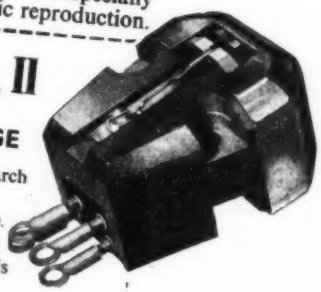


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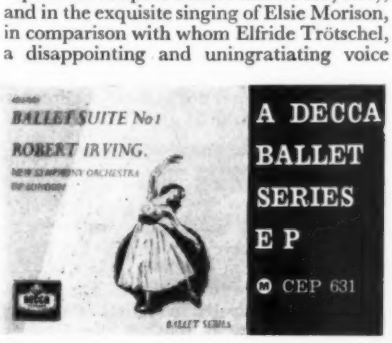
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scene, they are given performances by **Frederick Fennell** which are as sprightly as can be. The music, indeed, springs to life with a will. If the general sound is a little brass-heavy that would probably have been to Holst's taste anyway; and the brass meet their own match in the percussion, who carry the day before them, supported nobly by the recording, determined to miss no facet of the brilliant sound which is on offer in such splendidly generous measure.
M.M.

CHORAL AND SONG

FERENC FRICSAY. *The Seasons* (Haydn)—complete. **Troetschel** (sop.), **Ludwig** (ten.), **Greindl** (bass), **Choir of St. Hedwig's Cathedral, Berlin Ra dio Chamber Choir and Orch.** D.G.G. Mono LPM 18486-8 (three 12 in., 90s. plus 29s. 3d. P.T.). These records are available in Presentation Box with Notes at cannot be purchased se parately. From DGM 18025-8 (6/57).

It was only in September that J.N., reviewing the new Beecham recording of *The Seasons*, was lamenting the rapid disappearance of the D.G.G. version. Well, here it is back again, now much more economically on three discs instead of four, so that in format it is exactly comparable to the H.M.V. issue; and a formidable rival it is, even if for the English public it has the disadvantage of being in German (a good mark here to the H.M.V. for Dennis Arundell's much-needed new translation). It is free from the three main faults of the Beecham version—the misguided scoring-up of the recitative (which obliterates Haydn's subtle changes from harpsichord to string tone, e.g. before the summer storm and in the winter landscapes); the ram-the-point-home additions (e.g. the extra rifle shot in the autumn hunting vignette, and the quite superfluous tubular bells); and some unhappy tempi (e.g. the pompous *Vivace* opening of *Spring*, the autumn *ländler* so fast that the chorus can't sing it, the F major section of the tenor's *Winter* aria so slow that the melismata become laboured, and the guided-missile speed of the violins in the hunting chorus). But it has more positive virtues too—quite beautiful orchestral playing and accompanying throughout, a very good chorus (but so has the English issue), recording which is for the most part excellent (though occasionally the orchestral level is rather low in relation to that of the chorus—but this is so in the H.M.V. too). In two particulars the Beecham performance does score decisively—in the cataclysmic thunderstorm, beside which Fricsay's is a mere heavy shower (but is Beecham's conception more apt to Berlioz than to Haydn?), and in the exquisite singing of Elsie Morison, in comparison with whom Elfride Trötschel, a disappointing and uningratiating voice anyhow in this performance, is vastly inferior. The other two soloists are more evenly matched in the rival versions, though Alexander Young is a good deal lighter in tone than Walther Ludwig (an admirable tenor), and Michael Langdon, despite his fine florid passages in the hunting aria, in general sounds rather stiff beside Josef Greindl. No, on points I think the D.G.G. is definitely ahead.
L.S.



OPERA

VERDI. *Nabucco:* (a) Vieni, o Levita . . . Tu sul labbro de'veggenti. **Tozzi** (bass). *Il Trovatore:* (b) Timor di me? . . . D'amor sull'ali rosee. **Milanov** (sop.). *La Traviata:* (c) Lunga da lei . . . De' miei bollenti spiriti. **Valetti** (ten.). *Simon Boccanegra:* (d) A te l'estremo addio . . . Il lacerato spirito. **Tozzi** (bass). *Un Ballo in Maschera:* (e) Alzati! la tuo figlio . . . Eri tu; (f) Forse la soglia attinse . . . Ma se m'e forza perderti. **Warren** (bar. e), **Peerce** (ten.), *Aida:* (g) La fatale pietra. **Bjoerling** (ten. f), **Milanov** (sop.), **Barbieri** (m.-sop.). *Otello:* (h) Oh mostruosa colpa! . . . Si pel ciel. **Bjoerling** (ten.) **Merrill** (bar.). *Falstaff:* (j) E sogno? o realta. **Warren** (bar.). With **Rome Opera House Orch.** conducted by **Morel** (a, d), **Monteux** (c), **Bellezza** (j), **Perlea** (g), **Rome Opera House Chorus** (g), **R.C.A. Victor S.O./Cellini** (b, h), **New York Metropolitan Opera Orch./Mitropoulos** (e, f). R.C.A. Mono RB16089 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T. Item (b) from H.M.V. ALP1112-3 (3/54), (c) from H.M.V. ALP1419-21 (3/57), items (e, f) from H.M.V. ALP1476 (9/57), item (g) from H.M.V. ALP1388-90 (11/56), item (h) from H.M.V. BLP1053 (11/54). Item s (a, d and j) appear for the first time in this country.

This record arrived for review several months ago, but the pressing was a poser, since, instead of Milanov's *Trovatore* aria, there was an abbreviated and unheralded performance of "La donna è mobile" by Björling. R.C.A. have now sent a new pressing, and this does contain Milanov and omits "La donna". The choice has been made by the Met, and "constitutes a repr sentative cross-section of the Metropolitan as it is today".

Was Giorgio Tozzi worth two solos? The voice is pleasant and in tune, but not very striking; I did like the well-judged crescendo at "Prega, Maria, per me" in the *Boccanegra* solo. Milanov is her glorious, but very idiosyncratic self; you may think her rather throaty in "O terra addio" and imperfectly focused in "D'amor", but there are wonderful things to admire unless you're temperamentally antipathetic (which some of my friends are). Valetti's tenor is sympathetic, though with rather a fast vibrato to it. Warren gives a correct, somewhat ungenerous, account of "Eri tu". Peerce's voice is tight and fizzy to my ears, but his style is undisputed. Björling exploits Radamès's unhappiness to the full in the Tomb scene—he sounds the reverse of heroic—but floats some lovely phrases and top notes. Otello is not one of his roles; the voice lacks the requisite body to it, but he sings the music with plenty of enthusiasm; Merrill is rather a cardboard Iago. Warren's exposé of Ford's jealousy is thoroughly dramatic and full-bodied, with very clear words. But it cuts off at the end very suddenly. The quality of recorded sound, balance, and atmosphere, vary a good deal from band to band, sometimes being very convincing (as in *Aida*), sometimes rather constricted; woodwind are curiously exaggerated in two items. But all the voices tell clearly.

The only question is, how representative is this of the modern Met? What about London, and Gueden, and Tebaldi, and Della Casa, who all shed great lustre on the New York operatic scene? And back comes the answer, I suppose, that Decca is Decca, and R.C.A. is R.C.A., and though they may meet at the Met in New York and Albert Embankment in London, they can't do so on an American record. Still less so Los Angeles on H.M.V., and Gedda on Columbia, and Seefried on D.G.G. Surprising, one reflects, how many Metropolitan favourites *can* be brought together on one disc!
W.S.M.

★**BIRGIT NILSSON.** *Aida* (Verdi): Ritorna vincitor! . . . . L'insana parola; Qui Radames verra . . . Oh patria mia. **Nilsson** (sop.), **Philh./Ludwig.** Columbia Stereo ESL6265 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From Mono 33CX1522 (4/58) but appearing in stereo for the first time.

PATANÉ/EREDE. *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini): (a) O mio babbino; (b) Firenze e come un albero fiorito. *Falstaff* (Verdi): (c) Dal labbro il canto; (d) Sul fil d'un soffio etesio. (a) **Zeani** (sop.), (b) **Poggi** (ten.), (c) **Campora** (ten.), (d) **Gueden** (sop.) with **Santa Cecilia Academy Orch./Patané,** except item (a) by **Erede.** Decca Mono CEP626 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). Item (a) from LXT5599 (6/59); (b) from LX3127 (4/54): (c) appears for the first time in this country; (d) from LW5178 (8/55).

TULLIO SERAFIN. *Mefistofele* (Boito): Ave Signor, perdone se il mio gergo; Lontano, lontano . . . spunta l'aurora pallida. **Siepi** (bass), **Tebaldi** (sop.), **del Monaco** (ten.), **Santa Cecilia Academy Chorus and Orch.** Decca Mono CEP620: ★Stereo SEC5035 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). Mono from LXT5487-9 (6/59); Stereo from SXL2094-6 (6/59).

Stereo is kind to **Birgit Nilsson** and to her admirable accompaniment, balancing them vividly and naturally. What a beautiful singer! Like A.R., I was enchanted by the soft singing in "O patria mia", as by the full-throated phrases in the first-act scena. The **Patané/Erede** disc is a proper old mixture, unified by nothing save the fact that a cover picture of Buoso-Gianni "there in his crimson nightcap [only it's blue-and-white], the bedclothes drawn up tightly" could also serve for Falstaff at the start of the third Act, with his feet in the mustard bath. The *Falstaff* side is attractive, and I also liked Zeani's "Beloved Daddy" version, full of character and winsomeness; but Poggi sings throatily and the recording is not too clear in his aria—there's an untidy tape join too.

The *Mefistofele* excerpts under **Serafin** give us Siepi's colloquy with the Almighty, good in mono, even better for the choral interjections in stereo; and the end of the Prison scene, with Del Monaco singing "seconds" even louder than Tebaldi's tune. An intriguing introduction to a fine opera.
W.S.M.

RITA STREICH. *Voices of Spring* (Johann Strauss). *Parla Waltz: Il bacio†* (Arditi). **Streich** (sop.), **Berlin Radio S.O./Gaebel.** D.G.G. Mono EPL30505 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Item marked † from DG17052 (2/56), remainder from DGM19161 (9/59).

CHARLES CRAIG. *La Boheme* (Puccini): Che gelida manina. *I Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo): Recitar! . . . Vesti la giubba. *Aida* (Verdi): Se quel guerrier . . . Celeste Aida. *Rigoletto* (Verdi): Questa o quella. **Craig** (ten.), **Orch./Collins.** H.M.V. Mono 7EP7093; ★Stereo PES5255 (7 in., 9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.). Mono from CLP1271 (9/59); Stereo from CSD1264 (9/59).

Charming, reliable **Rita Streich** at her most come-hitherish, though not her most tender, in vocal waltzes. This is a Don't-touch-me-I'm-beautiful style of singing that, like its physical equivalent, enthralls and maddens at once. I speak as one who often turns to the LP originals for leisure listening.

I enjoyed **Charles Craig's** LP a good deal, though his singing is by no means all of a piece. On this extract you can hear him do a Björling in "Che gelida", and a Heddle Nash in "Questa o quella"; he sings "Celeste Aida" robustly, Canio's lament less interestingly. For a varied collection it has something to offer, no doubt of that. W.S.M.

GRE BROUWENSTIJN. *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni): Voi lo sapete, O Mamma. *Tosca* (Puccini): Vissi d'arte. **Brouwenstijn** (sop.), **Hilversum Radio P.O./Kempen.** Philips Mono SBF181 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). From NBE11018 (4/56).

EZIO PINZA. (a) *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart): Se vuol ballare. (b) *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart): Qui sdegno non s'accende. **Pinza** (bass). **New York Metropolitan Opera Orch./Bruno Walter.** Philips Mono SBF204 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). Item (a) from ABE10015 (5/57), (b) from ABE10018 (8/57).

LILY PONS. *Mignon* (Thomas): Polonaise. *Rigoletto* (Verdi): Tutte le feste al tempio. **Pons** (sop.), **Columbia S.O./Kostelanetz.** Philips Mono SBF198 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). From Columbia LX1514 (1/52).

You may know that this is a series of non-extended 45s called "Musical Gems". They are packed much like E.M.I.'s "Your Kind of Music", in limp paper without a protecting sleeve; the artists are rather more modern perhaps, and sometimes rather less moving. As here.

I like **Brouwenstijn's** "Vissi d'arte"; it is sensitive and extremely feminine, pathetic rather than soul-searing. Her account of "Voi lo sapete" is cold and decorous, though; she sings "Io piango", but she hasn't started to look for her handkerchief. **Pinza's** voice *qua* voice is something we don't have on the stage at present: modern *bassi cantante* can't combine suavity and line with edge. His singing of "Se vuol ballare" is decidedly interesting; this is a thoroughly dangerous Figaro whose guitar might easily be a musket in disguise. But for Sarastro (in Italian, like Victorian singers) he sounds imperious rather than benevolent, and his rhythm is decidedly unsteady. I have never understood the cult of **Lily Pons,** and this disc does not help to explain it. The *Mignon* Polonaise is bright, but inexact in pitch and dull in interpretation. Gilda's third act narration finds the singer shaky in the middle-to-lower register at the start and shrill later; but this is an unsatisfactory extract that ends out of key. The sound is clear and airy on the ladies' discs; Pinza is too close to the mike for comfort.

W.S.M.

FERENC FRICSAY. *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart): excerpts. **Streich** (sop.), **Stader** (sop.), **Greindl** (bass), **Fischer-Dieskau** (bar.), **Haefliger** (ten.), **Berlin Radio Chorus and Orch.** D.G.G. Mono LPEM19194 (12 in., 25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.). From DGM18267-9 (3/56).

The **Fricsay** *Zauberflöte* is the only one to contain spoken dialogue; A.R. thought it the best of the available sets. I quite agree with him, though I find Greindl a rather gritty Sarastro, and wish that the singers might have spoken their own dialogue (the talking Papageno doesn't sound a bit like Fischer-Dieskau). For this one-disc abridged version also contains dialogue, so that it, too, gives the effect of a real drama and not just a lot of highlights. There are some odd cuts, all the same—when Tamino and Papageno ask how they shall get to Sarastro's castle, and receive no answer save Monostatos's "Du feines Täubchen". There are a good many regrettable omissions (*Zauberflöte* is all highlights), but much of the most important numbers is included. I definitely recommend it to those who won't save up for the three-disc set. The envelope includes complete text of the selection including dialogue. W.S.M.

MOLINARI-PRADELLI. *La Boheme* (Puccini): Si, mi chiamano Mimì; O soave fanciulla; Quando me'n vo'; Mimì? Speravo di trovarvi qui. **Stella** (sop.), **Poggi** (ten.), **Rizzoli** (sop.), **Capecchi** (bar.), **Mazzini** (bar.), **Modesti** (bass), **Onesti** (bass), **Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli Orch.** Philips Mono ABE10124 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P T) From ABL3251 (11/59).

TULLIO SERAFIN. *Tosca* (Puccini): Recondita armonia; Non la sospiri; Vissi d'arte; E lucevan le stelle. **Stella** (sop.), **Poggi** (ten.), **Pudis** (bar.), **Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli Orch.** Philips Mono ABE10125 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From ABL3257 (11/59).

TULLIO SERAFIN. *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini): Quest'obi pomposa . . . bimba dagli occhi pieni di malia; Vogliatemi bene. **Tebaldi** (sop.), **Bergonzi** (ten.), **Santa Cecilia Academy Orch.** Decca Mono CEP619: ★Stereo SEC5034 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). Mono from LXT5468-70 (2/59): Stereo from SXL2054-6 (2/59).

★**ANTONIETTA STELLA.** *Manon Lescaut* (Puccini): Sola, perduta, abbandonata. *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini): O mio babbino caro. *Tosca* (Puccini): Vissi d'arte. *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini): Che tua madre. **Stella** (sop.), **L.S.O./Erede.** H.M.V. Stereo RES4253 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). Mono: ALP1428 (2/57). This record appears in stereo for the first time.

RENATA SCOTTO. *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini): Un bel dì, vedremo. *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini): O mio babbino caro. *Turandot* (Puccini): Tu che di gel sei cinta. *Mefistofele* (Boito): L'altra notte in fondo al mare. **Scotto** (sop.), **Philh./Wolf-Ferrari.** Columbia Mono SEL1643 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From 33CX1638 (5/59).

This is mostly a Puccini department. It starts well with part of the 12-inch *Bohème* anthology under **Molinari-Pradelli** which I have much enjoyed. Stella's Mimi does not thrill, but she intrigues; there is a good deal in her *racconto* besides pretty singing. A pity that the first side couldn't include the off-stage Bohemians' shouts which link this solo and the final duet, especially as they do fill out that duet—it is not otherwise a striking performance, saving Mimi's lively inflexion of "Curioso!" Musetta's waltz is delivered properly with the co-operation of the other participants, so as to lead into the climax where Marcello takes up her tune; Renato Capecchi is the excellent Marcello here and in the third act extract. The waltz is faded sharply to lead into this; it may be appropriate that Mimi should sound chesty in her complaint to Marcel, but musically it doesn't sound well. Even less happy is the sudden end to this duet. It is comic to hear Mimi utter "E finita", whereupon the record takes the cue and promptly finishes—but musically and dramatically nowhere. I cannot help feeling that EP buyers would fall for this disc in greater numbers if it contained "Che gelida manina" instead of this third act fragment.

The best things about Philips's 12-inch potted *Tosca* were Taddei's Scarpia and the continuity of the excerpts. Neither features in this EP, though **Serafin's** lyrical conducting makes an impression. The Act 1 duet, incidentally, starts way after "Non la sospiri", at "Ah, quegli occhi!", a dozen pages later. Stella's Tosca is more enjoyable than Poggi's plummy painter.

Comes the love duet from Decca's centenary stereo *Butterfly* set, also conducted by **Serafin,** a rich, lustrous-sounding performance that rolls round the palate even in a small excerpt like this. Where would you start this duet? Some say at "Bimba dagli occhi", others even later; I like to hear it start at the beginning with the seductive A major tune at "Viene la sera". Where *not* to start it is in the middle of that particular section, which Decca does; this is most unmusical. A fine Pinkerton, with the right hint of cruelty (when he speaks of the *farfallo* which his wife knows Americans love to impale on a pin) amid his vocal allure. This Butterfly, I feel, would have put up with no pin, and would indeed have taken hon'ble rolling-pin to the Bonze who gate-crashed her party.

Stella's Puccini disc has some admirers, and in stereo the voice has good presence, but I find her less attractive than in the Philips discs noticed above. Her pitch is faulty here, she is apt to squawk high notes, and she heaves her bosom too much for artistic satisfaction in Manon's lament. The Puccini part of **Renata Scotto's** first solo LP was, unexpectedly, the most successful; extracted here, the good things are highlighted but also the lack of ultimate control and finesse. It makes me keen to hear her next record, but not to buy this one. W.S.M.

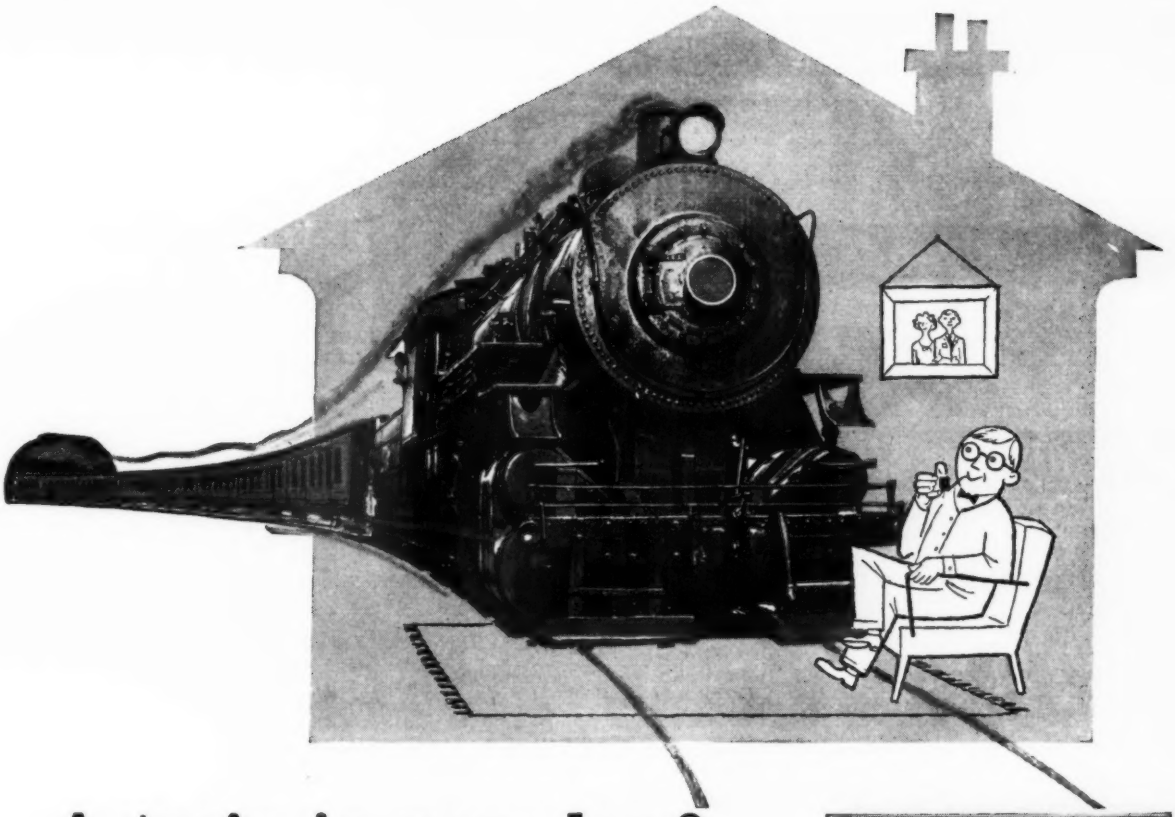
WILHELM PITZ. *Tannhäuser* (Wagner): Freudig begrussen wir; Begluckt darf nun dich, O Heimat, ich schauen; Heil! Der Gnade Wunder. **Schartel** (m.-sop.), **Bayreuth Festival Chorus and Orch.** D.G.G. Mono EPL30427: ★Stereo SEPL121024 (7 in., 12s. plus 3s. 11d. P.T.). Mono from LPEM19168 (10/59): Stereo from SLPM136006 (5/59).

GABRIELE SANTINI. (a) *Aïda* (Verdi): Gloria all, Egitto. (b) *Nabucco* (Verdi): Va pensiero, sull' ali dorate. (c) *Il Trovatore* (Verdi): Vedi! le fosche notturne. **Rome Opera House Chorus and Orch.** H.M.V. Mono 7ER5163 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). (a) from ALP1720 (7/59), (b) and (c) from ALP1672 (5/59).

GHIONE/EREDE. (a) *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni): Regina Coeli laetare . . . Inneggiamo, il Signor non e morto. (b) *Il Trovatore* (Verdi): Vedi! le fosche; Or co' dadi . . . Squilli e cheggi. **Nicolai** (m.-sop., a), **Anelli** (cont., a), **Tozzi** (bass, b), (a) **Chorus and Orch./Ghione** and (b) **Florence May Festival Chorus and Orch./Erede.** Decca Mono CEP627 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). (a) from LXT2928-9 (6/54), (b) from LXT5260-2 (11/56).

No doubt there are readers who only collect records of choral music, and watch these columns for likely purchases. They already have the original of this **Pitz** EP, I assume, in stereo form (real enthusiasts for choral music must have been among the first converts to stereo). Others who have been enjoying *Tannhäuser* at Sadler's Wells can be recommended to this EP which gives us the March from Act 2, and the Pilgrims' Chorus in Act 3, sung with superb sensitivity and, in the cries of Hallelujah! thrilling intensity of tone. The mono version is not as clear at climaxes as the stereo which gives a wonderful illusion of presence. In a month when I have heard 34 7-inch operatic or otherwise vocal discs this is the only one to include the words on the sleeve.

The **Santini** disc of choruses from Italian opera is well sung, and the forces are skilfully placed for effect; the trumpets in *Aida* are particularly good. The choral singing is not ideally fiery, but it coheres more expertly than that of the **Ghione**



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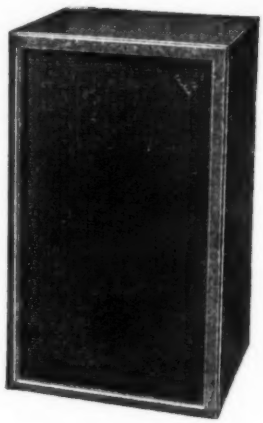


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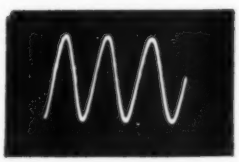
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Cavalleria Easter Hymn which seems a mistaken publication to me, so wobbly and careless does it sound. Fortunately **Erede's** *Trovatore* choruses go with plenty of swing and the ensemble is keen. W.S.M.

UGO RAPALO. *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni): Prelude; O Lola; Intermezzo; Mamma, quel vino e generoso. **Mancini** (sop.), **Poggi** (ten.), **Lazzarini** (cont.), **Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli Chorus and Orch.** Philips Mono ABE10150 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From ABL3256 (11/59).

UGO RAPALO. *I Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo): Si puo? Signore! Signori!; Nome di Dio! Quelle stesse parole! **Protti** (bar.), **Beltrami** (sop.), **Poggi** (ten.), **Monachesi** (bar.), **Nobile** (ten.), **Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli Chorus and Orch.** Philips Mono ABE10151 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From ABL3256 (11/59).

ALBERTO EREDE. *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini): Una voce poco fa; Ora mi sento meglio . . . a un dottor della mia sorte. **Simionato** (m.-sop.), **Corena** (bass), **Florence May Festival Orch.** Decca Mono CEP625 (7 in., 11s. plus 3s. 7d. P.T.). From LXT5283-5 (2/57).

Last November I thought that Poggi delivered the Siciliana in the *Cavalleria* prelude more pleasantly than usual, but was dull and doughy elsewhere. I am no fan of Mascagni's scoring (but are you, honestly?) so two items on this EP are a waste of time—I played them religiously and **Mr. Rapalo** only convinced me in my view of Mascagni as an incompetent orchestrator — my memory is that he improved later, though not much. This leaves the Siciliana, and this month, having heard it sung with some artistry just lately, I am feeling less tolerant towards Poggi's cold plum-duff rendering. The *Pagliacci* disc is enjoyable with Aldo Protti in good form, and a good Nedda to support Poggi in most responsive mind. The *Barbiere* excerpts under **Erede** are disappointing: Simionato's intonation is hit or miss in this very taxing music, and Corena hams Dr. Bartolo excessively.

W.S.M.

HISTORICAL

LOTTE LEHMANN. Brahms. Das Madchen Spricht, Op. 107, No. 3; Mein Madel hat einen Rosenmund; Die Botschaft, Op. 47, No. 1. **Wolf.** In dem Schatten meiner Locken; Anakreons Grab; Auf ein altes Bild†; Auch kleine Dinge†; Peregrina No. 1.† **Pfitzner.** Gretel, Op. 11, No. 5. **Beethoven.** Ich liebe dich. **Marx.** Selige Nacht. **Jensen.** Lehn' deine Wang' an meine Wang', Op. 1, No. 1. **Schubert.** Die Manner sind mechant! from "Vier Refrain Lieder", Op. 95, No. 3†; Der Erlkonig, Op. 1†; An die Musik, Op. 88, No. 4†. **Lotte Lehmann** (soprano), **Erno Balogh** (piano) except items marked † which have accompaniments by **Paul Ulanowsky** (piano). Camden Mono CDN1015 (12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T.).

Some of these recordings were issued here in a Lieder Album in 1936-7, and it is good to see them again generally available. They were all apparently recorded between 1935 and 1940, and the transfers are excellent.

Lotte Lehmann has herself spoken of the difficulty she experienced in scaling down her earlier operatic style to the more intimate demands of Lieder, but many of the songs included in this disc show how well she succeeded. She is probably least successful in *Der Erlkönig* which I prefer sung by a man, but in the Wolf songs in particular her intensely human qualities and the warmth of her voice which was still incomparably beautiful when these recordings were made, add for me a quality of magic which I find generally missing even from the Gerhardt recordings.

This record is again a tremendous bargain, and a precious souvenir of a great artiste. Now may we, please, have a reissue of her *Walküre* Act 1 with Melchior, and her *Rosenkavalier?* J.F.

EMILE SCARAMBERG. La Favorita (Donizetti): Ange si pur (Fonotipia 39359, 1905). **Romeo et Juliette** (Gounod): Ah, leve-toi soleil (39172, 1905). **Mireille** (Gounod): Anges du paradis 39189, 1905). **Reine de Saba** (Gounod): Inspirez-moi (39180, 1905). **Sigurd** (Reyer): Entree de Sigurd (39176, 1905). **Carmen** (Bizet): Romance de la fleur (39178, 1905). **Mignon** (Thomas): Elle ne croyait pas (56095, 1905-6). **Si j'etais Roi** (Adam): J'ignore son nom (56074, 1905-6). **Werther** (Massenet): Un autre est son epoux. . . . J'aurais sur ma poitrine (Fonotipia 39179, 1905); Pourquoi me reveiller (39186, 1905). **Manon** (Massenet): Je suis seul. . . . Ah fuyez douce image (39174, 1905). **Lakme** (Delibes): Fantaisie aux divins mensonges (56049, 1905-6). **Lohengrin** (Wagner): Ah respirons (39187, 1905). **Cavalleria Rusticana** (Mascagni): Sicilienne (39175, 1905). **Paillasse** (Leoncavallo): me grimer (39358, 1905). **Fedora** (Giordano): Air de Loris (39173, 1905). **Emile Scaremberg** (tenor). Rococo Mono R18 (12 in., 28s. 6d. plus 9s. 6d. P.T.).

To most collectors the name Scaramberg means very little, and the biographical notes given on the sleeve are more than usually welcome. From these notes, and from the records themselves, one can see that Scaramberg was one of the better French tenors of his day, but there is no evidence to suggest he was a great singer. From these transcriptions it is clear that he had a fine sense of style and first rate diction, while the voice, which is not an intrinsically beautiful one, is used with skill and artistry. The excerpts from French opera are well done, but the Italian ones, sung in French, hardly justify their inclusion. Perhaps most collectors will find that a little of Scaramberg will suffice, and I would suggest trying first the Olympus EP—ORE205, which contains four titles. If you like these, then this disc, which is very well engineered, will undoubtedly please you. J.F.

BIDU SAYAO. (a) *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini): O mio babbino caro. (b) *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini): Un bel di vedremo. **Sayao** (sop.), with (a) **New York Metropolitan Opera Orch./Cimara** and (b) **Orch./Leinsdorf.** Philips Mono SBF199 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). From ABE10095 (2/59).

A deliciously fresh "Babbino caro" absolutely in character for the pretty young Lauretta of Puccini's opera—though does Sayao sound perhaps *quite* enough of a minx? Anyway, it's charmingly sung. On the other hand, to reissue yet again this very mannered and un-flowing old recording of "Un bel dì" is not doing just ice to the memory of this favourite Brazilian soprano's artistry. L.S.

LUISA TETRAZZINI. Rigoletto (Verdi): Caro nome. **Mignon** (Thomas): Polonaise. **Romeo et Juliette** (Gounod): Valse Air. **Lucia di Lammermoor** (Donizetti): Mad Scene. **Le Nozze di Figaro** (Mozart): Voi che sapete. **Il Barbiere di Siviglia** (Rossini): Una voce poco fa. **Don Giovanni** (Mozart): Batti, batti. **Lakme** (Delibes): Bell Song. **Dinorah** (Meyerbeer): Shadow Song. **Voci di primavera** (Johann Strauss). **La Traviata** (Verdi): Ah, fors' è lui . . . Sempre libera. **Luisa Tetrazzini** (soprano). Olympus Mono ORL210 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

Tetrazzini made some Zonophone recordings in 1904-5, probably in San Francisco or Mexico, but her first widely circulated records were made in London in 1908 shortly after her Covent Garden début, and the disc under review contains transcriptions of all the first issue.

It has become fashionable in certain quarters to suggest that Tetrazzini was capable of nothing beyond her amazing displays of vocal fireworks, but contemporary criticisms make it very clear that she could colour her voice to an astonishing degree for a soprano leggiero, and that she was also a very good actress. Her technique was amazing. Her descending chromatic scales, her staccato, her effortless attack even in alt., and her habit of releasing a loud high note, and then without breathing repeating it pianissimo—all these things can be heard in these recordings. On the other hand, apart from "Ah, fors' è lui" they give only glimpses of her wonderful legato singing, or of the "Larmes dans la voix" of which so much was written.

Tetrazzini was unique, and her position in operatic history is secure, even if her recordings did not always do her justice. Among the examples included on this disc, the "Ah, fors' è lui" and "Sempre libera", the "Ardon gl'incensi", the "Una voce" and the "Ombra leggiera" are superb examples of coloratura singing and more than counterbalance her doubtful style in the Mozart excerpts.

Unless they possess all the 1908 originals and can play them really adequately, collectors will find this disc a most useful addition to their libraries of Golden Age recordings. J.F.

HELEN TRAUBEL. *Tristan und Isolde* (Wagner): Liebestod. **Traubel** (sop.), **New York P.O./Rodzinski.** Philips Mono SBF203 (7 in., 5s. 3d. plus 1s. 8½d. P.T.). From Columbia LX941-5 (4/46).

It is good to have this disc to remind one of Helen Traubel's noble and warmly beautiful voice, but grievous that the *Liebestod* should be issued on a 7-inch disc that, in this case, compels a turn-over in the middle (just before "Höre ich nur diese Weise"). This is no way to treat a great Wagnerian soprano whose Isolde was famous. Can R.C.A. not reissue the fine Traubel-Toscanini recording of "Brünnhilde's Immolation" and some other items from her Wagnerian repertory together with the *Liebestod*, on a 12-inch disc? Her voice is well balanced with the orchestra, and has the commanding power that was lacking in the Varnay recording (which *was*, by the way, accommodated on a 7-inch disc) issued last month (EPL30466). It is glorious singing and ends with a radiant high F sharp.

A.R.

WAGNER. (a) *Die Walküre:* Ho-jo-to-ho!"; War es so schmahlich?; Du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht . . . Leb'wohl, du kuhnes herrliches Kind!. **Frida Leider** (sop.), **Friedrich Schorr** (bass-bar.). *Götterdämmerung:* (b) Mime hiess ein murrischer Zwerg, Brunnhilde, heilige Braut!; (c) Schweigt eures Jammers jauchzenden Schwall!; (d) Brunnhilde's Immolation. **Frida Leider** (sop.), **Lauritz Melchior** (ten.). H.M.V. Mono COLH105 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.). (a) Recorded in 1927; (b) in 1930, (c) and (d) 1928.

The dates of these discs will show, to those who have studied the matter, that they were made in the first "boom" years of electrical recording, "a process which saved the industry from ruin". They were issued in January 1928 (*Walküre*) and Octber 1931 (*Götterdämmerung*), and our reviewers at those periods (Peter Latham and H. J. Klein) were amazed at the large volume of sound and the excellent balance. The performances they regarded as superlative; and as one who heard these great artists at Covent Garden many times I can say that, in my opinion, they have not since been surpassed.

In "Some reminiscences of Frida Leider",

in the booklet, David Harris (the B.B.C.'s opera manager whose tragically early death was announced last November) speaks of Leider's voice "as about the biggest I ever heard in the theatre . . . its strength lay in its solid middle register— and being a thick, dark voice with a splendid natural vibrato (not a wobble) it reached the low G more easily than the top C". That is true —but the top notes were securely there even though they had not always the ease of Austral's or Flagstad's. Leider was a superb actress, economical in her gestures, and an extraordinarily dominant personality on the stage.

One very notable thing about her singing and that of Melchior and Schorr on these discs is their fine and meaningful enunciation and their rhythmic vitality. They were completely identified with their parts. Leo Blech shows the same identity with the music, the same sensitivity and vitality in his direction of the orchestra. Schorr's Wotan was a noble figure indeed. It will be a revelation to those who never heard him, to listen, in the "Farewell" to his singing of "Denn Einer nur freie die Braut, der freier als ich, der Gott!" ("For one man only may woo the bride, one freer than I, the god!"). Here speaks a god indeed: and how tenderly he sings "zum letzten Mal" ("for the last time let thine eyes gladden me today"). There is a wonderful range of expression here. Melchior was a *Heldentenor* in the great tradition, untiring, with a fine, powerful voice, ringing top notes, round and beautiful tone. His singing of Siegfried's *Narration and Death* is something hardly approached today. Leider in the "Immolation" scene sounded, of course more magnificent in the opera house than on this recording, good though it is. Her top notes are not always happily caught but there is no mistaking the fine quality of her great and thrilling performance.

To appreciate it fully one should have the volume turned up as high as is comfortable to the ear, even though this makes her vibrato more obtrusive than it ever was in the theatre. The engineers have done wonders with the transfers. Surface noise is non-existent, the balance between voice and orchestra is very good and one marvels at the excellence of the orchestral tone, even though the brass—the horns in particular—do tend to stand out in the "Kiss" theme, and the passage following, in "Wotan's Farewell". There are also some odd sounds in the fire-music; but this was 1927! The parts of Hagen and Gutrune are well taken by Otto Helgers and Elfriede Marherr-Wagner.

The booklet gives the texts of the extracts and indicates the cuts. It also contains short articles on all the singers and some Wagnerian memories by Frida Leider. On the front page, opposite her photograph as Brünnhilde, Leider writes, "I count myself happy if, in this record, I can make an artistic offering to opera-lovers throughout the world".

This she most certainly has done, together with her colleagues (who are no longer with us) and I hope H.M.V. are planning more transfers from the discs of this great period of Wagnerian singing. A.R.

PASSING NOTES

By ARTHUR JACOBS



Georg Solti [*Photo: S. LeBlanc*].

The recent articles in this journal by John Culshaw of Decca and Peter Andry of E.M.I. have given a glimpse of that vital but rarely-spotlighted figure, the Recording Supervisor. The man who takes charge of recording sessions on a company's behalf must have a musician's ear and a diplomat's tact, a planner's vision and a kindly uncle's heart. At recording sessions I have noted how readily the most famous of conductors and performers listen to the critical comments of Recording Supervisors. So I was not surprised to hear a tribute to Mr. Culshaw paid by the conductor who worked with him on Decca's rapturously praised stereo *Rheingold*: **Georg Solti.**

Apart from general musical ability, Mr. Solti considers that the main quality needed by a conductor for success on records is quickness of reaction—the immediate ability to decide, during a play-back or even while actually conducting, whether a particular section of music will have to be done again. The presence of a whole cast of opera singers adds to the complexity, of course: Miss A or Herr B may like to have another try at a high B flat which did not come out quite right, though the conductor knows that the total effect of the passage was as good as it will probably ever be. Mr. Solti considers that opera cannot be recorded in what he calls *very* short sections. He aims at a continuous section of ten minutes: rarely can a longer passage be achieved without a necessary interruption.

Mr. Solti (pronounced Sholtee) is Hungarian by origin, and the "Georg" should really be "György"; but he adopted the German form for international convenience, and of course it suits his present position: he has been musical director of the Frankfurt Municipal Opera since 1952. He travels much, but thinks (like some other conductors) that, apart from obvious peculiarities like horn-tone in France, the differences between the world's orchestras are becoming less. "For instance, it's nonsense to say that your Covent Garden orchestra couldn't play waltzes like a Viennese orchestra: it's just a matter of who's the conductor".

Mr. Solti should know, for there are waltzes enough in *Der Rosenkavalier*, which he has been conducting at Covent Garden. He has recorded in Paris, London, Berlin, Vienna, and Tel-Aviv—in the Frederic R. Mann auditorium, about whose suitability to recording he is not quite so enthusiastic as W.S.M. (no relation) was in these columns last May. He hopes shortly to record Italian opera in Italy, and it comes as no surprise that he would like—after *Das Rheingold*—to go right through *The Ring*.

* * * *

I hear that the recent visit of the **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra** to Australia and New Zealand made a great impression: it was, believe it or not, the first European full-size symphony orchestra ever to be heard there. Astonishing, is it not, that no British, no American symphony orchestra has found the visit worth while? **David Oistrakh,** who must be one of the most sought-after players in the world, has also recently played there.

Oistrakh must have been impressed with the conducting of **John Hopkins**—formerly of the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra, now conductor of the New Zealand National Orchestra—since it was through Oistrakh's good offices that Hopkins has been invited to give concerts shortly in the U.S.S.R. Recently he conducted the N.Z. National Orchestra in its first commercial LP recording, a record for H.M.V. of "festival overtures" including one by the New Zealand composer Douglas Lilburn. May we have it in H.M.V.'s home catalogue, please?

* * * *

Two more one-volume musical omnibuses—the Collins' Music Encyclopedia, 739 pages, 42s.; the *Dizionario della musica e dei musicisti* (Ricordi), 1,155 pages, 100s. The Ricordi volume uses smaller type, so the words-per-shilling ratio is perhaps about equal; but if you can read Italian, there is no doubt which is the more helpful to the inquiring collector. Do you wish to know more about modern composers like Henze, Boulez, Iain Hamilton? about such instrumentalists as the two Oistrakhs, Isaac Stern, Segovia? about opera singers of the past such as Ponselle, Farrar, Supervia? All are in the Italian volume, but they get not a line in the English one. Its editors, J. A. Westrup and F. Ll. Harrison, evidently envisage a public more interested in the fourteenth-century theorist Marchetto (15 lines), the *hufnagelschrift* (a type of plainsong notation, 5 lines), and an opera which they represent phonetically as "ler ca-leef der bug-dud". This is a good, but academic, volume.

Talking of Boulez: my Christmas card from Heugel, the French music publishers, was circular. It was a non-commercial disc, 7-inch but 33⅓ r.p.m., of two movements of the Piano Sonata No. 2 by this French composer.

* * * *

From America, where he has been on tour, **Alfred Deller** sends me some concert programmes and some enthusiastic notices. I note from an accompanying advertisement for his Vanguard (U.S.A.) records that the Americans can buy more of his recordings than we: four discs by the Deller Consort devoted to the English madrigal school should certainly be worth hearing. I note, further, that the discs are more expensive in stereo than in mono form —an interesting divergence from usual English practice. But with most interest of all I noted his concert-promoter's remark at the bottom of a New York recital programme:

> If your coughing causes you distress, annoys the artists and our patrons, please let us help you. Kindly signal an usher and you will be provided with a delicious lemon-flavoured Vicks Vitamin C Cough Drop.

NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

By W. A. CHISLETT

BANTOCK. (a) *Celtic Symphony;* (b) *The Frogs;* (c) *The Women's Festival.* **London Promenade Orch.** cond. by (a) **Walter Collins,** (b) **Sir Granville Bantock,** (c) **Dolf van der Linden.** Paxton Mono LPT1003 (10 in., 22s. 3d. plus 7s. 3d. P.T.).

Sir Granville Bantock (1868-1946) has been shabbily treated by the major recording companies. It was left to Paxton, the music publishers, to issue a series of 78s containing a small but representative selection of his music shortly after the end of the war. These three pieces are successfully dubbed from them and they are the first of Bantock's music to appear in LP form except the Beecham *Fifine* recording of 1953 (to be deleted at the end of this month).

All three pieces date from between 1935 and 1941, the prolific years of composition which followed immediately upon his retirement from the Professorship of Music at Birmingham University in 1934, an appointment in which he had succeeded Elgar in 1907.

Although a Londoner by birth Bantock was of Scottish extraction and Scottish music in general, and that of the Hebrides in particular, along with the Orient were major influences in his work. The *Celtic Symphony* of 1940 is scored for strings and harp and is both romantic and joyous; and for those who do not know Bantock's music it is well to say that it is rich in good tunes. The scoring is vivid and clear. The two overtures are both inspired by Greek plays of Aristophanes. The comedy *The Frogs* tells of the competition in Hades between Aeschylus and Euripides as to which of them should return to earth to restore the dying art of tragedy. *The Women's Festival,* another comedy, tells of the trial and conviction of Euripides at the Thesmophoria, the women's private festival, and Bantock's music is festive in style and ends in a blaze of triumph. *The Frogs* is of particular value in that the performance is directed by the composer.

The recording is of course not up to the best 1960 standards but is more than adequate and I hope that many will be tempted to buy this record.

ANTON PAULIK. Waltzes, Galops and Polkas. *Sperl Polka; Sperl Galop; Lorelei-Rheinklange Waltz; Radetzky March; Donaulieder Waltz* (Johann Strauss I). *Die Romantiker Waltz; Die Schönbrunner Waltz* (Lanner). **Vienna State Opera Orch.** Top Rank Mono 35/016 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

This is a particularly welcome addition to the repertoire of waltzes and other dances of Vienna because only the *Radetzky March, Schönbrunner Waltz* and *Lorelei-Rheinklänge Waltz* are currently available in other recordings. Both Johann Strauss père and Lanner are undeservedly overshadowed in the catalogues by the former's eldest son. The lively and spirited *Sperl Galop* and *Polka* date from 1831 and 1842 respectively and are named after the famous Sperl restaurant. *Donaulieder* is one of the many waltzes to take its title from Vienna's great river and is one of Strauss senior's most charming compositions. *Die Romantiker* is probably second only in popularity to Lanner's *Schönbrunner* but I do not remember ever to have heard a record of it before.

Professor Paulik, who has been chief conductor at the Vienna Volksoper for fifteen years, secures beautifully affectionate playing in the waltzes and the shorter pieces sparkle delightfully. And, most important, all are played complete and not shorn of any of their beauties. Towards the end of the *Radetzky March* there is a passage which despite all efforts makes my stylus jump but this would seem to be a flaw in my particular copy. The recording is bright and forward.

★**FREDERICK FENNELL. March Time.** *Bugles and Drums; Illinois March; Children's March; The Interlochen Bowl; Onward—Upward; Boy Scouts of America; Americans We; Officer of the Day; March "Grandioso"; 2nd Regiment Connecticut N.G. March; The Mad Major; Guadalcanal March* from "Victory at Sea". **Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble.** Mercury Stereo AMS16012 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.). Mono: MMA11035 (6/59).

FREDERICK FENNELL. Marches for Twirling. *His Honor; The U.S. Field Artillery; Glory of the Gridiron; On the Mall†; Pride of the Illini; The Stars and Stripes forever; Our Director; The Billboard†; Semper Fidelis; Barnum and Bailey's Favorite†; Manhattan Beach; National Emblem.* **Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble.** Mercury Mono MMA11067 (12 in., 28s. 9d. plus 9s. 4½d. P.T.).

★**BANDA TAURINA. American Military Marches.** *Washington Post; Anchors Aweigh; El Capitan; King Cotton; Atlanta; Marine's Hymn; National Emblem; Semper Fidelis; American Legion; Glory; March of the Zacatecas; Stars and Stripes forever.* **Banda Taurina/Genaro Numez.** Audio Fidelity Stereo AFSD5836 (12 in., 35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.).

ROYAL SCOTS GREYS. Second to None. *Regimental March; Semper Fidelis; Light of Foot; Old Comrades; The New Colonial; Sons of the Brave; Colonel Bogey; Garb of Old Gaul; El Capitan; The Stars and Stripes for Ever; Great Little Army; The Contemptibles; Imperial Echoes.* **Band of the Royal Scots Greys.** Top Rank Mono 35/035 (12 in., 26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.).

Of these four records of military marches many, but not all, are well known. The best from every point of view is that in stereo by the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble. I reviewed the mono version of this very enthusiastically last June and in stereo it sounds even better, substantially better in fact, particularly in the matter of balance in which the mono version rather tends to favour the percussion department. The realism is now quite thrilling and the playing is the personification of virtuosity. Mr. Fennell keeps a fine swing in the rhythm whatever the tempo, some of which vary a little from those to which we are accustomed here but are none the worse for that.

Within the limits of mono "Marches for Twirling" is every bit as good as the previous record. Fine, crisp playing, chording that is as clean as the proverbial whistle and spacious recording. Many of the marches will be unfamiliar to English ears but it is an excellent selection, mostly of the quicker variety of march, enlivened sometimes by singing and whistling. There is no doubt that this is one of the finest military bands we have today and the recording is worthy of them. The three items marked † are also available, together with the *American Patrol,* on a Mercury EP (XEP9025). The four titles, in fact, having already appeared as part of a 12-inch LP (MMA11042.)

By comparison the Banda Taurina, which is the official band which plays regularly in the Plaza Mexico in Mexico City, sounds positively ragged. Moreover the recording is of a dry and dead quality and has less reverberation than I like.

The Band of the Royal Scots Greys comes between the other two. It is recorded in mono only. The band is far superior to that from Mexico City and it also has the advantage of better recording but there is not quite the brilliance of either performance or recording that distinguishes the two fine Mercury records.

★**EMMANUEL VARDI. Waltzes.** *Tales from the Vienna Woods; Emperor; Wienerblut; Blue Danube* (Johann Strauss II). **Virtuoso Symphony of London.** Audio Fidelity Stereo FCS50013 (12 in., 35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.).

This is diametrically opposed in characteristics to the Audio Fidelity disc by the Banda Taurina. Here not only is the recorded tone first-class but the quality improves by something like geometrical progression as it is played on better and better equipment. Moreover the playing of the Virtuoso Symphony of London directed by 40-year-old Emanuel Vardi, Palestinian by birth but American by adoption, is full of warmth and affection. Mr. Vardi declares that he does not feel bound by tradition and convention but has studied these glorious waltzes in the original editions and plays them as he feels they should be played. Add to this the fact that they are played complete, with the zither prelude and postlude to *Tales Of The Vienna Woods,* the lovely coda starting on the horns to *Emperor,* etcetera, and the sum total is a desirable record for all who have really good quality equipment.

CARMEN DRAGON. Stephen Foster Melodies. *De Camptown Races; My Old Kentucky Home; Old Black Joe; Old Dog Tray; Massa's in de cold, cold ground; Oh Susanna; Jeannie with the light Brown Hair; Old Folks at Home;Come where my Love lies dreaming.* **Capitol S.O.** Capitol Mono P8501 (12 in., 30s. plus 9s. 9d. P.T.).

These arrangements are all by Carmen Dragon, with whose work both as arranger and conductor we are now becoming familiar in this country. They range from the quite simple to the more elaborate and although all are effective and tasteful it is the simpler ones that I like the best. Simple melodies such as these, like folk music, can easily be robbed of their charm by over-elaboration. In one or two instances Mr. Dragon goes near to doing this but just avoids it. What good tunes they are! The playing is immaculate and the recording is good although not quite up to Capitol's highest standard in the matter of clarity.

MUSIC FROM WALES. Famous Welsh Songs. *Iesu o Nazareth; The Pilgrims; Myfanwy.* **Helen Watts** (contralto), **Trevor Anthony** (bass) with a section of the **London Symphony Orch.** cond. by **Mansel Thomas.** Qualiton Mono QMP2003 (10 in., 22s. 3d. plus 7s. 3d. P.T.). **The Music of Dr. Joseph Parry.** *Gweddi'r Pechadur; Y Bardd; Berwyn; Y Marchog; Y Dymestl; Brad Dunrafon.* **Pendyrus Male Voice Choir** (Soloist, Emlyn Lewis) cond. by **Arthur Duggan.** Qualiton Mono BMP2001 (10 in., 22s. 3d. plus 7s. 3d. P.T.). **Songs and Hymns.** *Llef; Hyfrydol; Shepherd's Lullaby; The Lord is My Shepherd* (QEP4000). *Were You There?; When I Survey the Wondrous Cross; O Isis and Osiris; Close thine Eyes.* **Treorchy Male Voice Choir** cond. by **John H. Davies** (QEP4025). *The Crusaders; Cymru'n Un; Si hei lwli mabi.* **Moriston Orpheus Male Choir** (QEP4012). The last three records are Qualiton Mono 7 in. EPs, 9s. 2½d. plus 3s. 6½d. P.T each.

The richness of Wales in male-voice choirs is strikingly illustrated by this issue from the Qualiton Company but before coming to these there is the excellent record of half a dozen songs of Wales, three sung by Helen Watts and three by Trevor Anthony (both of whom are natives of the country). Although among the best and best-loved of Welsh songs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these will be unfamiliar to many. *Gweddi'r Pechadur* (by Morfydd Owen, a girl who died in 1918 at the tragically early age of 26) is both highly emotional and dramatic. *Y Bardd* and *Berwyn* are more austere and are fine settings of poems which exploit the Welsh love of intricate metres and complicated alliterations. These are beautifully sung by Miss Watts. *Y Marchog* (The Cavalier) is full of life and vigour and *Y Dymestil* and *Brad Dunrafon,* both very dramatic, reveal Mr. Anthony's rich voice and interpretative powers equally successfully. I hope that many who do not understand Welsh will be tempted to hear this record for its sheer musicality. In future similar issues the sleeve-notes would be improved if they included translations or transliterations of the words.

Joseph Parry (1841-1903) emigrated at the age of 13 with his family to America but returned to become a great figure in Welsh music. He is best known to Englishmen as the composer of the grand hymn tune *Aberystwyth.* He was also the composer of the most successful of all Welsh operas, *Blodwen.* The three items on QMP2001 are typical of his best work, are highly popular as test pieces at National

Festivals and are beautifully sung here by the 140-strong Pendyrus Choir.

The Treorchy Choir is also a large body (100 or more strong). For their two 45s they go to many countries for the music and are equally at home in all. As is so often the case with Welsh Choirs there is a wonderful body in even the softest of tone. QEP4000 lacks dividing bands which is a pity. There is a slight tendency to rattle at climaxes if the pickup is not of good quality and well tracked.

The best known of these choirs on records is that of Morriston which I have praised several times in this column. Here they are as good as ever, particularly in Protheroe's *The Crusader*, which is finely laid out. The words of *Cymru'n Un*, by the way, are by David Lloyd George.

A NIGHT IN VIENNA. *Vienna, City of My Dreams; Pizzicato Polka; Sweets for my Sweet; Vienna Blood; Perpetual Motion; Blue Danube; Artist's Life; Tales of the Vienna Woods; Kalter Kaffee und Heisse Jazz; Merry Widow Waltz.* **101 Strings** Pye Mono GGL0018; ★Stereo GSGL10018.

THE SOUL OF SPAIN. *Malaguena; Domingo en Seville; Espana; La Violetera; Macarenas; Espana Cani.* **101 Strings.** Pye Mono GGL0017; ★Stereo GSGL10017.

A HI-FI BAND CONCERT. *Anchors Aweigh; Corcoran Cadets; Handicap March; American Patrol; Under the Double Eagle; Billboard March; Marine's Hymn; There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight; March of the Toys; National Emblem March; Grand Old Flag.* **Pride of the '48.** Pye Mono GGL0031; ★Stereo GSGL10031. All Mono records 12 in., 15s. 10d. plus 5s. 2d. P.T. All Stereo records (12 in., 20s. 9d. plus 6s. 9d. P.T.).

There are ten tracks on "A Night in Vienna" and they range from the waltzes etcetera of Johann Strauss, through Lehár's *Merry Widow Waltz* to more recent trifles such as *Cold Coffee and Hot Jazz*. So far as the older pieces are concerned there are recordings that are more desirable both in arrangement and recording, which tends to be rather hard and lacking in warmth in the strings. In "The Soul of Spain" Chabrier's *España* is both the best and best-known item. Of the rest I like best Padilla's lively *La Violetera*. *Malaguena* by Ramirez is the most extended composition; it is indeed extended beyond the worth of its musical content. The brilliance of the recording is better suited to this music. Voices, by the way, are introduced into *Sunday in Seville*. "A Hi-Fi Band Concert" includes eleven marches, most of them familiar. Here the recording sounds a little top-heavy. My criticisms of the recording in these records are based on hearing them on first-class equipment. The deficiencies are comparatively less pronounced when they are played on a smaller and less expensive set. I have only heard them in stereo and should not be surprised to find that in the mono versions the hardness at the top and lack of solidity at the bottom is less pronounced.

FIESTA EN MEXICO. Miguel Dias and his Mariachi Players. Audio Fidelity Mono AFLP1816 (12 in., 33s. 2½d. plus 10s. 9½d. P.T.)

For quality and realism of sound this is one of the best records that I have heard for some time. It is clean and clear, well separated and with a good incisive bite but no hardness or harshness at the top and rich firmness at the bottom. Mariacha derives from the French, not Spanish as might be imagined and denotes a popular band which may be of three or four instrumentalists or may be quite large but in either case is based on strings, plucked and bowed. In the Miguel Dias band trumpets are used a good deal and with excellent effect. The twelve pieces are spirited and lively for the most part and all but three or four are traditional airs arranged by Dias himself. The others are of more recent date but similar in style. They are allied to Spanish traditional music and the zapateado is one of the most popular rhythms. Included is *Jarabe Tapatio*, better known here as the Mexican Hat Dance, which is supposed to suggest the courting dance of a pair of doves. A thoroughly enjoyable record for all who like this high-spirited and exotically-inclined music played in authentic style and, as I have said, extremely well recorded.

STUDENT AND HEURIGEN SONGS. *Aennchen von Tharau; Der Lindenbaum; Treue Liebe; Sehnsucht; Die Lorelei.* **Erich Kunz** (baritone) with Male Chorus and Orchestra of the **Vienna State Opera** conducted by **Anton Paulik.** Top Rank Mono 15/006 (7 in., 11s. 3½d. plus 3s. 8½d. P.T.). *Wien, Wien, nur du allein; Wieder in Wien; I bin a Weaner Kind; I bin a echter Weaner.* **Julius Patzak** (tenor) with the **Grinzinger Schrammeln Orchestra** conducted by **Hans Totzauer.** Top Rank Mono 15/002 (7 in., 11s. 3½d. plus 3s. 8½d. P.T.).

Pride of place among this month's EPs undoubtedly goes to these records made by two of the world's really great artists, each of whom is notable, among other things, for his versatility. Erich Kunz is equally at home as Figaro, Leporello and Beckmesser, as in simple songs such as these which he sings with rare beauty and distinction and is splendidly supported by both chorus and orchestra. I have criticised some of Top Rank's sleeves in the past for their paucity of information, but this is a welcome exception.

Correspondingly, Patzak is famous for his Mozart roles and that of Florestan in Beethoven's *Fidelio*, and also as a Lieder singer, but he, too, is able to expend a wealth of care and affection on these simple but attractive Heurigen songs beloved of Vienna. He is admirably accompanied by an authentic schrammell band of flute, clarinet, guitar, accordion, piano and string sextet. At 61, Herr Patzak still retains a remarkable freshness of voice, a tribute to his production. Two very delightful records.

* * * *

It is unfortunate that "The Orange Flute" by **Sam Wilson and the Loyalists** (Top Rank Mono RX3012) should arrive for review hard on the heels of the vintage recording of a similar selection of Ulster songs (including several that are duplicated) by Richard Hayward and the Loyal Sons of William, reviewed last month. Mr. Wilson has neither the style nor the personality of Mr. Hayward, though the recording and presentation do their best for him. Four of the titles on this 12-inch LP are also issued in EP form (JKR8025).

In August and September last I reviewed the first two EPs of the very promising young Polish soprano, **Bogna Sokorska,** who started learning to be a ballerina, but after six years changed her mind and began to train as a singer. These two operatic arias and four songs from films and musicals are now released on LP (Top Rank Mono 35/020) along with "They call me Mimi" from *La Bohème*, "O my beloved father" from *Gianni Schicchi*, and a vocal version of Strauss's *Voices of Spring*. In the new songs, as in the earlier ones, Mme Sokorska deserves a better accompaniment than those provided by the Pinewood Studio Orchestra.

The well-known and well-loved voice of **Edmund Hockridge** is heard to very good advantage in "Show Stoppers from the Twenties" and the orchestral accompaniments directed by **Alyn Ainsworth** and **Peter Knight** are also first class. Here are a dozen of the great songs from *The Vagabond King, The New Moon, The Land of Smiles, A Connecticut Yankee, Bitter Sweet, Rose Marie, Rio Rita, This Year of Grace* and *Show Boat* in as good a form as could be desired (Pye Mono NPL18040).

Extended selections of music for pipes and drums are not everybody's choice. Top Rank offer two to choose from and as a mere Sassenach I am ungallant enough to prefer "Scotland's Pride" by the **Royal Scots Greys** on 35/030 (mono) to "Tartan and Velvet" by the **Dagenham Girl Pipers** on 35/033 (mono), although not by a large margin.

From Top Rank also comes the first record by the **La Salle Boys Band,** which plays a selection of Irish and Scottish airs and dances. This band of eleven (with an average age of fifteen) was only formed recently, but has already been acclaimed in England and America as well as at home. The De La Salle Brothers (a widespread order) founded the band in connection with their College on the south side of the River Liffey in Dublin. The band consists chiefly of accordions, with two drummers and a double bass. A very enjoyable record in its field (35/029, mono).

"In a Monastery Garden", which gives the title to a selection of the music of A. W. Ketélby, was a war-time composition. It dates from 1915, when the expression of sentiment was what the public wanted and needed. Ketélby was already 40. He followed it with other similar and semi-descriptive pieces and for the next fifteen or twenty years they had a tremendous vogue. In more recent times they have been comparatively neglected. The sentiment may be facile, but the craftsmanship is first rate for Ketélby was a sensitive musician and a keen critic of his own work. Nine of his best-known works are here collected together in excellent performances by the **New Symphony Orchestra of London** conducted by **Robert Sharples,** and it is very good to have them played as intended and not by the two men and a boy type of combination by which they have been murdered so often. The mono version (Decca LK4329) is very good and that in stereo (SKL4077) is brilliantly successful. *In a Monastery Garden* and *In a Persian Market* are also released on EP (mono-DFE6613; stereo-STO126).

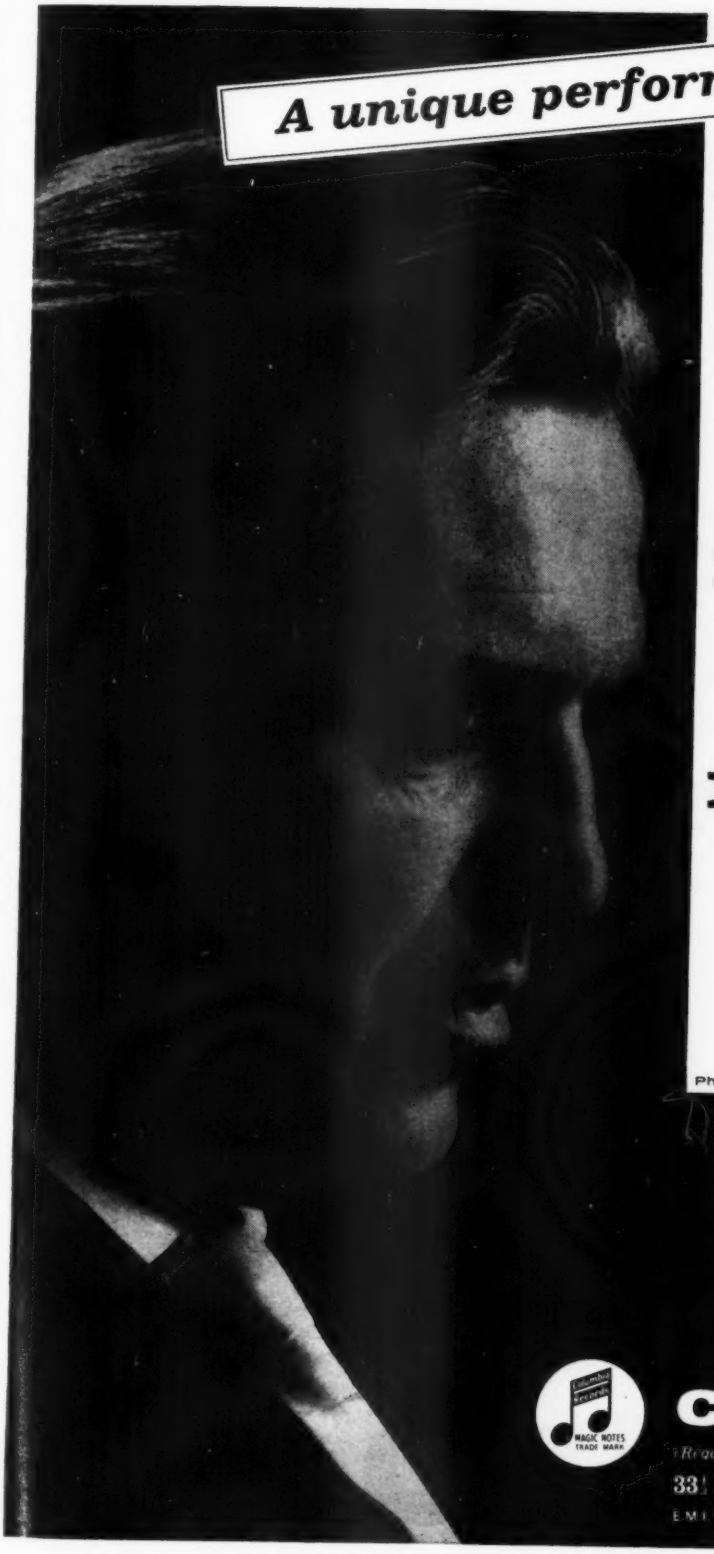
"Paris Dances", played by the **Lamoureux Orchestra** under **Marcel Cariven,** includes an abbreviated version of the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffman*, a Quadrille from *Orpheus in the Underworld*, Debussy's *Golliwog's Cakewalk* and a fragment from *Coppélia*. Both playing and recording are a bit rough, but the sound is very forward and clear. The harp is somewhat over-conspicuous in the first named (Top Rank Mono JKP2004).

"Scottish Country Dance No. 12", by the **Jimmy Blair Scottish Dance Orchestra** on Fontana Mono TFE17193, is as good as its predecessors, which means that it is ideal for its avowed purpose.

Nelson Eddy is featured in three mono selections from evergreen musicals, each of which contains four numbers, and all of which are strongly recommended as mementos of the respective shows. He has excellent partners and orchestral and choral support. He partners **Dorothy Kirsten** in *Rose Marie* (Philips NBE11100), **Eleanor Steber** in *New Moon* (NBE11101) and **Nadine Connor** in *Naughty Marietta* (NBE11116).

Harry Mortimer's "All Stars" Brass Band is probably the best brass band heard on records today. In three new and excellently recorded EPs are four tracks that have been previously released in the form of singles. To these are added eight titles, all of which are, I think, new releases. It is in delicacy that a really first class band reveals its superiority and on these records it is in such items as MacDowell's *To a Wild Rose*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Hindoo Song*, Eric Ball's *Indian Summer Suite* and Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* that the band is heard to the best advantage. No brass band enthusiast should miss hearing these discs (Paxton Mono PEP108-110).

The four tracks which were transferred from the **Soviet Army Ensemble's** fine LP (Col. 33C1049, reviewed in December 1956) and issued in mono EP form in January 1959 are now released in stereo (Col. ESL6266). I said recently that I was not sure that stereo does not do more for choral singing than for anything else. It certainly does much for this recording. The mono reveals the good tone and excellent discipline of this famous choir, but in stereo we



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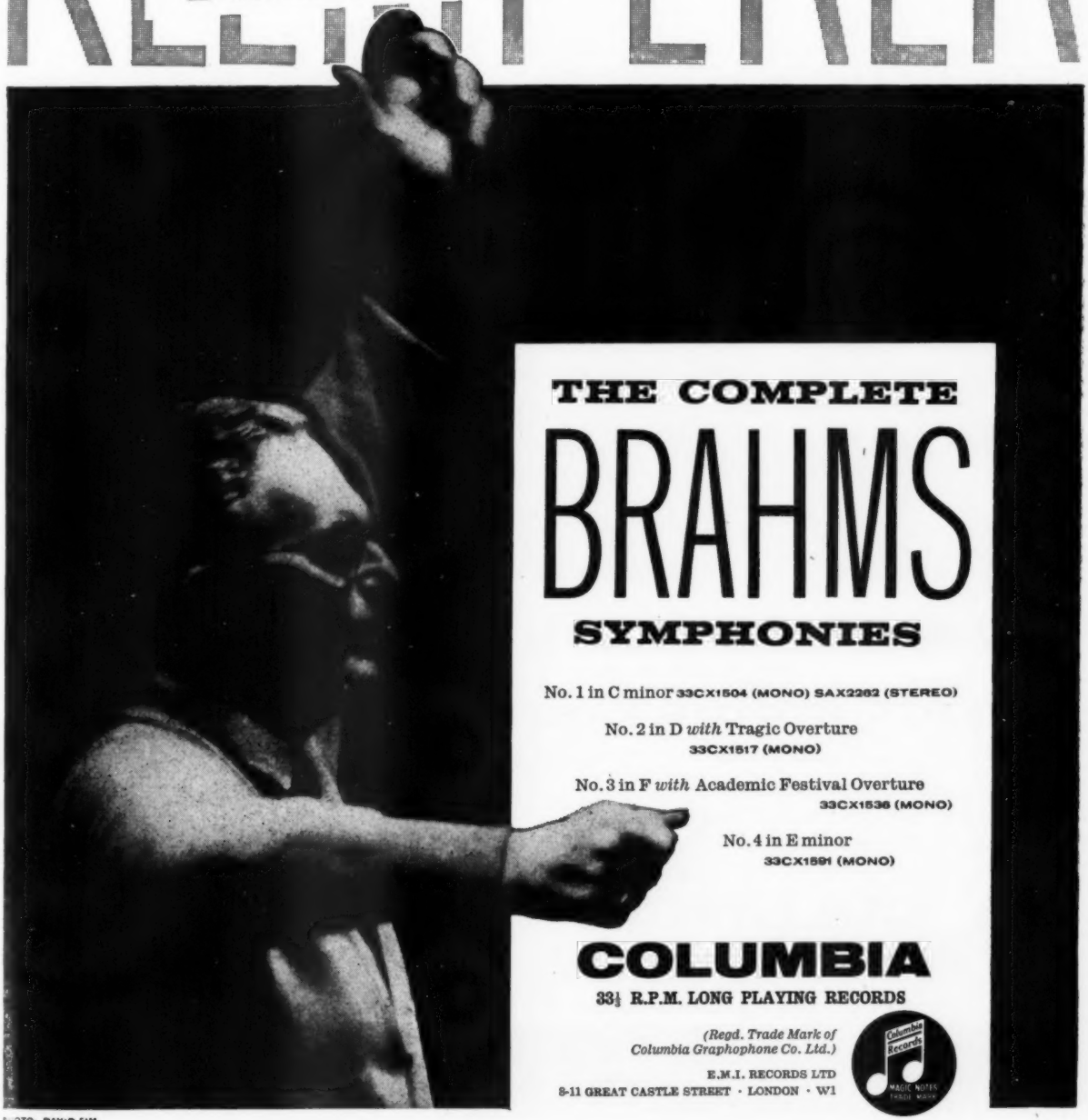


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have a greater spaciousness and spread, which adds a lot to the realism of the sound. The four items are *Kalinka*, a very attractive love song, the Soldiers' Chorus from Shaporin's *The Decembrists*, the gay *Along Peter's Street* and *Bandura*, in which a lover falls back on the friendship of his zither-like instrument when away from his beloved.

My only children's record this month is "Poems and Songs for Younger Children" on Jupiter Mono JEP OC11. There are eleven short poems and songs, some well known to children and others less so and, as they are read and sung by many different people, there is considerable variety in quality. In the main they are well presented, but some do not attain the standard which we ought to get for 15s. 11d. The best I think are **Pauline Letts** in John Clare's *The Red Robin*, William Allingham's *Up the airy mountain* and Kenneth Grahame's *Duck's Ditty* and **Osian Ellis** in *Three Little Kittens* and *Willie Boy*.

I end with two groups of single 45s. There are four in E.M.I.'s "Your Kind of Music" series and they very wisely and properly continue to give on the labels the dates of the original releases and I quote these along with the numbers in brackets. Columbia's contributions are the **Philharmonia Orchestra** under **George Weldon** in a serviceable version of Suppé's *Light Cavalry Overture* (SCD2108, May 1953) and the same orchestra under **Karajan** in a brilliant Sibelius *Finlandia* (SCD2115, November 1953). The two from H.M.V. are Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre* in a fine performance by the **A.B.C. Sydney Symphony Orchestra** under **Sir Eugene Goossens** (7P236, May 1954) and **Tito Gobbi's** famous "Song of the Mountain" and "Take the Sun" from the film *The Glass Mountain* (7P240, May 1950).

I do not want to indulge in carping criticism, but now that we have so many sizes of disc might not more be done in the way of tailoring the disc to suit the music? Surely the ideal is two short pieces on the two sides of singles and two longer ones on the two sides of EPs. We get a lot of singles with one longer piece divided between the sides and even more EPs with four pieces on them.

Philips could well follow E.M.I.'s example in giving the dates of the original releases of records now appearing in their excellent "Musical Gems" series, of which I have three new releases. **Grace Moore's** *Ciribiribin* and *One Night of Love* is obviously not recent, for she died in 1947. It still sounds good (SBF200). The other two are devoted to the ubiquitous **Father Sydney MacEwan** and are *The Road to the Isles* and *Land of My Heart* (SBF207) and *Scotland the Brave* and *Misty Islands of the Highlands* (SBF208).

MISCELLANEOUS AND DANCE

POP SINGLES

A little while ago I recommended a record of Anne Shelton singing *The Village Of St. Bernadette*. This has now appeared sung by **Rosemary June,** the American girl who hitherto has made a few discs of no great appeal, I thought. Her singing here is well up to Anne Shelton's, and the other side is, by contrast, a rhythmic *But Not For Me* (London HLT9014). If she always sings like this, I'll be glad to review her work. Anne Shelton's young sister, **Jo Shelton,** is on Top Rank JAR245 in two most attractively done songs, *If There Are Stars In My Eyes* and *I Need Your Arms Around Me*. How like her somewhat better-known sister she sounds!

Sheila Buxton, by contrast again, has temporarily forsaken her well-scrubbed girl-next-door style and gone all seductive in *All I Do Is Dream Of You* and *Shakedown*, from the film of that name, on Top Rank JAR240, and **Mitzi Gaynor** (Top Rank JAR258) sings *Play For Keeps* and the title song from her latest film, "Happy Anniversary", very appealingly. Although **Jane Morgan** sounds a little sad in the latter number on London HLR8999, her other number more than compensates in being adult, tuneful and in every way delightful. It is called *C'est la vie, c'est l'amour*, but only the title is French. **Kitty Kallen** (Philips PB971) is making a second come-back; first she appeared with Harry James's Orchestra in 1946, then as a solo act on Brunswick in 1954, and this time singing *The Door That Won't Open* and *If I Give My Heart To You* adequately if not excitingly.

The male singers among the singles include old reliable **Perry Como,** on R.C.A. 1156, singing *No Well On Earth*, an old-style mother-song, and a quasi-religious number, *A Still Small Voice*, a sermonette which suits his easy tones; and **Henri Salvador,** whose tunelessness seems strangely attractive to British listeners, perhaps on account of his French accent (Felsted SD80062). I don't know if **The Singing Reindeer** were men or women in their previous existence before the Wicked Witch of the Speeded-Up Tape got hold of their voices, but they appear now as a pastiche of the Chipmunks in *The Happy Reindeer* on Cap. CL15097, and though they are given artist-credit on the label on the other side, in fact *Dancer's Waltz* is a rather pleasing flute solo with rhythm. **The Browns,** of course, are quite normal men and women, and on R.C.A. 1157 they sing *Scarlet Ribbons* (see also the EP and LP section) and *Blue Bells Ring*, virtually the same tune as *Three Blind Mice*.

Although I don't really like drum solos, as they are hardly music in themselves, I have to give it to **Sandy Nelson** and his unnamed unit that the patterns in rhythm worked out in *Drum Party* and the old wartime favourite, *Big Noise From Winnetka*, are well worth hearing on London HLP9015. I even found this more appealing than the weird soprano saxophone in an echo-chamber on Oriole CB1523 in *The Cool Spectre* and *Singing Ghosts*, from the TV series "A Mask For Alexis". The soloist is **Frank Weir.**

EPs and LPs

In the last paragraph but one above, I referred to a new single of *Scarlet Ribbons*. I think this has become associated with **Harry Belafonte,** whose original recording, along with three new ones that suit his plush style very well, is now issued on R.C.A. RCX1049. **Frank Sinatra** (Cap. EAP1-1224) has a set of four songs, all hitherto on singles, from his recent film "A Hole In The Head", and on Fontana TFL5074, he is given space to recall mostly oldies of the 1945-50 era, of which there seems to be an inexhaustible supply. *Love Is A Kick* is the rather odd title, and the set includes that richly satisfying tune *Deep Night*, rather too dressy here.

Most of the other worth-while vocal records are by big choral groups, which always enjoy a big vogue around party-time. Talking of parties, you may like to eavesdrop on **Tommy Trinder's,** recorded in a bar at Butlin's Camp, Clacton-on-Sea. It features the usual embarrassing on-the-spot interviews with people with little or nothing to say, the whole thing being driven along, amateur talent (?) and all by the effervescent Mr. Trinder (Fontana TFL5073). How often anyone can bear to listen to this is a very moot point. Once was enough for me.

But to return to the chorus records. Take your choice from the **Adam Singers,** who, on Pye NPL28013, *Sing Something Simple* (though not the old song of this name) and swallow some syllables in the process, who come artistically somewhere between the American sophistication of **Ray Conniff's** Singers (Philips BBL7354) singing *words*, and very nicely too, of numbers such as *It's The Talk Of The Town* and others not too threadbare, and singing *sounds* (Philips BBE12320) of Broadway show tunes from the recent LP, and the olde-worlde party-songs and choruses offered by the **Bill Shepherd** Chorus on Nixa NPL18041. Personally I would rather recommend the **Mitch Miller** Chorus on Philips BBL7354, with its exquisite diction and good selection, or the *Reverie* of the **Norman Luboff** Choir on Philips BBL7337, even if this consists entirely of pop tunes based on classical themes by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Chopin and the rest. The **Mike Sammes** Singers on Fontana TFL5070 evidently consider the sounds matter more than the sense. I disagree, and remain in favour of the Conniff, Miller and Luboff records.

Shirley Jones and **Jack Cassidy** (Philips BBL7339) make a pleasant husband-and-wife team, and **Benedict Silberman** and his Chorus and Orchestra introduce some interesting Jewish music on Pye NPL28012. Some of this is adapted folk music, and should have some appeal even to non-Jewish listeners, I feel, speaking as one such. Other folk music—of a sort—is to be found on Nixa NPL18043 by **Lonnie Donegan** under the title *Lonnie Rides Again*. This offers somewhat greater scope than his previous LPs, and includes a *San Miguel* that in no way compares with the Kingston Trio's lovely version a few months ago. There is some semi-folk-song by **Merle Travis** and his acoustic guitar on Cap. EAP1-891, amusing enough if basically simple, and some more of obviously sophisticated upbringing by **Miki and Griff** on Nixa NEP24116. None of these are great voices, academically speaking of course; for that, we must listen to **Harry Secombe,** whose diction in both English and Italian and whose tone have all improved lately, on Philips BBL7349.

Two very odd vocal records have come to me this month. I must warn the sensitive that the cover of Audio-Fidelity AFLP1833 is not for the prudish; it depicts an almost naked Egyptian dancing-girl in full wiggle, and the record is by **Mohammed Al-Bakkar** and his Ensemble in genuine Egyptian song and music under the name *Port Said*. The second is Felsted ESD3083, entitled *An Evening At La Poubelle*. This, the sleeve-note informs us, is French for "dustbin", and is the name of a night-spot that sells no alcohol, but which gives a truly French atmosphere to its little corner of London night-life for the patronage of French residents and British Francophiles, albeit teetotal ones perforce. Here, we are told, we can hear *real* French artists, in a *real* French atmosphere. So the four tracks on the record are by an Italian singer, a Cuban band, a thing that might have come straight out of an American juke-box and a pseudo-Dixieland band with (really, no kidding) a *real French vocal chorus*. But then, of course, the French are very cosmopolitan.

Now let me discuss some of the instrumental and orchestral items. They are still resurrecting

Glenn Miller, and Top Rank 35-023 consists of a second set of excerpts from his two films. But **Bobby Byrne** and the Alumni Orchestra (Top Rank 35-028) sound more like Miller than Miller does on the sound-tracks; they play *In The Mood* and all those other Miller "favourites" that everyone else has been imitating more or less successfully ever since the original batch of 78s by Miller came off the presses twenty years ago. On Top Rank JKP2010, the Alumni play Jimmy Dorsey specials, which leads me to fear that we may be in for a spate of phoney memorials to both the Dorsey Brothers if the musical body-snatchers have their way. This isn't a bad disc, but one longs for a breath of the living and fresh air to permeate the recording studios instead of this unhealthy hankering after the dead and the past.

But soft, I pray you! Top Rank TR5010 offers two numbers by the **Tommy Dorsey Band**—"his greatest", says the sleeve—in real old killer-diller style, and if that doesn't satisfy the evidently deep-rooted appetite for the dear old days of the 1940's, then surely Top Rank 35-027, giving us a 12-inch set of further excerpts from T.D.'s repertoire, should help. I perceive the early 'forties have receded sufficiently far into the past to acquire the roseate patina of nostalgia.

But still this is not enough. Top Rank go further and further yet, in presenting **Enoch Light** and the Light Brigade in a set of music recalling *The Flirty 'Thirties* (why flirty? Unless it's because it rhymes with thirty, in which case we can shortly expect *The Nifty Fifties*, I suppose), on 25-002, and on 25-001, a second volume of *The Roaring 'Twenties*, doo-wacka-doo, banjo, tuba and all, by the same leader and the Charleston City All-Stars.

The third **Dorsey—Pierre**—and no relation of Tommy and Jimmy—is also represented here on Pye NPL28012 in a selection of love-songs arranged for large string orchestra under the title *Amour perdu*. **Paul Whiteman,** again on Top Rank (which will surely soon become known as the label featuring the most nostalgia) plays *When Day Is Done* and *Ramona* amongst others from his recent LP (JKP2011). An interesting souvenir of the ex-King of Jazz (*sic*).

But Top Rank have issued a more modern unit on JKP2023 under the direction of bassist **Chubby Jackson.** Even this, though, gives relaxed versions of *The Saints* and *Alexander's Ragtime Band*!

I must recommend the beautifully restrained exotic music of **Arthur Lyman** on Vogue VA160149. It's a set called *Bwana a*, and though it includes a Hawaiianised *Serenade* by Schubert, there is something very beautiful about the marimba, guitars and other native instruments (despite the jungle noises thrown in). Coming nearer home, there is a court-dress version of the *Porgy And Bess* score by **Percy Faith's** Orchestra on Philips BBL7312, though I should have thought we would have had enough of this by now, and the same orchestra offers four melodies in typically dressy style by the late Victor Herbert on Philips BBE12330.

Mantovani no longer holds a monopoly of the big string sound, for on Top Rank 35-036, the **Knightsbridge Strings** play yet another set of theatre song hits, with a big plug for Harrod's on the sleeve. and on the same label, **Jack Saunders'** Orchestra (35-021) play tunes from shows produced by the late Mike Todd in a big, lush, bombastic manner which would doubtless have delighted Mr. Todd. As if this plethora of show tunes were not enough, the new Ace of Clubs popular series now announces (ACL1013) a set of *Broadway Waltzes* played by **Johnny Douglas** and the **Kingsway Symphony.** These include the usual *Wunderbar, Out Of My Dreams* and *A Wonderful Guy*.

Since they are apparently American, the **Kingsway Strings** can have no other connection with the last-named unit than the nominal similarity, but they sway gracefully through four well-loved waltzes of the really old school on each side of Pye Golden Guinea GGL0028. This is evidently intended for skating to; it moves easily enough.

For dancing, there is a party-time disc by **Cliffie Stone** and his Orchestra (Cap. T1080), on which a chorus gives instructions on how each step is performed, and on Nixa NPL18042 **Joe Henderson** and his piano and rhythm provide incentive to sing all the old and some of the more recent chorus numbers to those so inclined, if they can remember the words, in a quick-fire medley.

THE MONTH'S CHOICE

Jane Morgan	London HLP8999
Ray Conniff Chorus	Philips BBL7354
Norman Luboff Choir	Philips BBL7337
Arthur Lyman	Vogue VA160149
Knightsbridge Strings	Pye Golden Guinea GGL0028
Johnny Puleo's Harmonica Gang	Audio-Fidelity AFLP1830

Two new pipe-organ records should finely delight the fans of this most massive of instruments. The world's largest is on display at the hands of **Al Melgard** on Audio-Fidelity AFLP1886. It is housed in the Chicago Stadium, and though it may well justify the claim made for it, the music here is of the most trivial *Parade Of The Wooden Soldiers* genre. The second is **George Wright's** playing of the Paramount Theatre Organ in New York on Vogue VA160157. The same remarks apply, though some of his selections are of "pops".

Quite the most remarkable instrumental disc for some time is also an organ feature—the harmonica or mouth-organ. **Johnny Puleo** and his Gang (Audio-Fidelity AFLP1830) offer the most amazing variety of sounds on their five harmonicas, some of the music much more adventurous than anything executed by either of the monsters in the previous paragraph.

JOHN OAKLAND

STEREO/MONO POPS

These records are reviewed in their stereo form. The equivalent mono numbers, where available, are included for convenience.

A myth, if you'll forgive the pun, can be as good as a smile. Something very like this assumption, at any rate, seems to underlie the present flood of mood music, those escapist anthologies devised to accompany almost every function of day-to-day living. The 1950s, the era of hi-fi and LP, has really seen this genre take root in the gramophone industry, and one of the men who was in right at the start is **Paul Weston,** once a staff-arranger with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra. It's ten years since Weston recorded his first LP, "Music For Dreaming", a record which was reviewed—quite kindly—by Oliver King in the December, 1950, issue of THE GRAMOPHONE. Now the process has been repeated, using the same title and exactly the same arrangements (the tunes include *Laura, Out Of Nowhere, Don't Blame Me* and *Easy Come, Easy Go*) but this time recorded in stereo and issued on Capitol ST1154 (mono T1154). Perhaps the passage of ten years has made the scoring sound just a wee bit predictable; the emphasis is upon smooth, well-integrated string playing, although a muted trumpet makes its appearance here and there. But the basic premise of mood music is that it should never shock or surprise, never jerk the listener into a waking state. That's why "The Joy Of Living", Capitol ST1148 (mono T1148) by **Nelson Riddle** and his orchestra, can scarcely be slotted into this category. Described on the sleeve as "twelve danceable, gently swinging reasons why it's great to be alive", these boisterous arrangements of such optimistic themes as *Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries, Makin' Whoopee* and *It's A Big, Wide, Wonderful World* make lively use of the orchestra's resources. Where in Paul Weston's scores the strings are always swaying, the harp rippling, the trumpets hidden behind mutes, here the arranger doesn't mind being unconventional—scoring trumpet and bass in unison on *You Make Me Feel So Young*, or even making use of grotesqueries (the wa-wa trumpet in *Bye Bye Blues*). And I was glad to hear a sensitive arrangement of Alec Wilder's fine song, *It's So Peaceful In The Country*, one of the better tunes of the 1940s. The only drawback to this LP is Riddle's insistence upon letting a grunting, corn-fed bass-trombone loose upon nearly every track. No doubt the gimmick was intended to stoke up the jollity; I found it maddening.

The very first comment I made when I started reviewing stereo pops last July was that Glenn Miller had become a symbol of nostalgia for almost every British subject over thirty and under fifty. Here is yet another tribute to the potency of the Miller legend—"Symphony For Glenn", Pye GSGL10024 (mono GGL0024), eleven tunes made famous by the Miller band, performed by the **Hamburg Philharmonia Orchestra**, conducted by Heinrich Alster. These versions are much lusher than the originals, yet some of the vitality has disappeared. Joseph Kuhn's arrangements are competent but not very daring; he does little more than decorate the melodies, letting the violins glitter, being careful to get a Miller sound from the reed section. *Moonlight Serenade, At Last, Perfidia, I Know Why*, and melodies of that ilk are smoothly performed, but the attempts at introducing jazz solos into *Tuxedo Junction* and *In The Mood* come a bit unstuck. The work of the tenor saxophonist is particularly stilted. Another "Golden Guinea" LP, Pye GSGL10025 (mono GGL0025) presents the **101 Strings,** complete with celestial choir, in "Award Winning Scores From The Silver Screen". These are rather grandiloquent arrangements of *Three Coins In The Fountain, The High And The Mighty* and ten other film-tunes, including three I'd never heard of before—*Spellbound Concerto, Picnic* and *Tara's Theme*, the last-named, it appears, coming out of "Gone With The Wind". More melodies from the films can be heard on two Columbia EPs. ESG7771 (mono SEG7932) has **Geoff Love** and his Concert Orchestra playing "Academy Award Songs" (*The Way You Look Tonight, When You Wish Upon A Star*, etc.), while "Melody Time" by **Ray Martin** and his Orchestra, ESG7760 (SEG7899) includes versions of *Three Coins In The Fountain, High Noon* and *The Tender Trap*. Ray Martin's arrangements are a little more varied, not quite so string-laden. Yet another Columbia EP, ESG7757 (mono SEG7875) has its link with the cinema. Entitled "Al and Judy", and bearing photos of Mr. Jolson and Miss Garland on its sleeve, this record consists of medleys of songs made famous by these two stars. The packaging is a little deceptive, however, for at a second glance and a first hearing you discover that the EP is actually the work of **Norrie Paramor** and his orchestra.

Next come two LPs completely devoted to the art of Cole Porter (yet a third, a mono issue by Anita O'Day, is reviewed at the end of the jazz section). The first, "You Do Something To Me", Columbia SCX3273 (mono 33SX1171), is a gathering of well-known Porter melodies performed by **Victor Silvester** and his Silver Strings, the tunes ranging all the way from 1929 (*You Do Something To Me*) to 1956 (*I Love You, Samantha*). The sixteen tracks split up into ten quicksteps, two slow foxtrots, two rumbas and

two waltzes. Rather more to my taste is **"Jeri Southern** Meets Cole Porter", Capitol ST1173 (mono T1173). Not so long ago I was ungallant enough to compare Miss Southern to the Sphinx at midnight, the allusion being to a certain aloofness in her style. On this LP she still keeps a firm rein upon her emotions, but as it happens the lyrics gain enormously from this restraint. Two splendid examples of dangerously slow yet perfectly controlled singing can be found in *It's All Right With Me* (taken at an unusually lazy tempo) and *After You*. Miss Southern's diction, however, is splendid at whatever speed she sings. Especially interesting is the fact that the LP mainly consists of more obscure songs by Cole Porter, including *Don't Look At Me That Way, Why Shouldn't I?, Weren't We Fools, Looking At You* and *Which?*, a delightful ballad of moral confusion, simply bulging with period references.

I doubt if two girl singers could be more unlike each other than **Peggy Lee** and **Shirley Bassey**. Where the former sounds light and feathery, the latter is simply busting out all over. If one judged from a histrionic standpoint, of course, then Miss Bassey would win every time. "The Fabulous Shirley Bassey", Columbia SCX3287 (mono 33SX1178), has a torrid quality that Miss Lee just cannot brew. But it also becomes a little oppressive after a time; there is such a thing as being over-dynamic. I'm delighted, however, to find that Shirley Bassey is sounding less and less like Eartha Kitt nowadays; only on a couple of tracks does she betray the influence. The songs are all good ones and include the slightly off beat *Cry Me A River*. Praise of the noble male is the theme of Peggy Lee's LP, "I Like Men", Capitol ST1131 (mono T1131), on which she sings *I'm Just Wild About Harry, Bill, Jim, My Man, Charley My Boy*, and similar ditties. All that really need be said is that Miss Lee sings with her customary nonchalance, that the stereo spreads nicely across the wall and that Jack Marshall's arrangements achieve just about the right amount of diversity.

When I reviewed a **Gordon MacRae** LP last November I described the singer as standing half way between Bing Crosby and Heddle Nash, and occasionally sounding a bit like Frank Sinatra. That still seems the best way of describing the singing to be heard on "The Seasons Of Love", Capitol ST1146 (mono T1146), whereon Mr. MacRae's genial baritone voice escorts us through a calendar of passion. The songs include *Spring Is Here* (with one of the best and saddest lyrics that Lorentz Hart ever wrote), *June In January, It Might As Well Be Spring, September Song* and *When It's Springtime In The Rockies*. All very clean-limbed and competent. "As co-creators of this late-at-night music, private life best-of-friends Frank and Dino have put together twelve of their favourite sleepy-time ballads", runs the hic-cupying prose on the back of "Sleep Warm", Capitol ST1150 (mono T1150), on which Dean Martin sings and Frank Sinatra conducts the orchestra. These performances are as dull as porridge. The tunes range from *Hit The Road To Dreamland* to *Goodnight My Love* and Brahms' *Lullaby*, all interpreted with a gluey kind of charm. It was a relief to turn to the good, old-fashioned sentimentality of "Bud", Columbia ESG7756 (mono SEG7876), an EP of **Bud Flanagan** singing *Strollin', Home Is Where Your Heart Is, Maybe It's Because I'm A Londoner* and *Goodbye Sue*. Bud's voice isn't exactly a superb instrument but one does feel in the presence of a real person. Which is more than you can say about the **Kirby Stone Four**, heard in bewildering stereo on "Whooping It Up!" Philips SBBL545. (Eight of the titles have been issued on two mono EPs, BBE12210 and BBE12246.) Gimmicks, gimmicks, everywhere, and not an inch of art. Voices drift in and out of echo chambers, sometimes merging with what sounds like a bass trombone moving in tandem with a muted, high-register trumpet. It's cleverly done, I suppose, although the plethora of tricks actually weakens the stereo impact. Most of the songs are "standards"—*Lullaby Of Broadway, Baubles, Bangles And Beads, Whispering*, etc.—but also included is *Fugue For Tinhorns* (from "Guys And Dolls"), sounding to my ears less like a fugue than a canon.

One of the troubles about reviewing records of many wildly differing kinds is that unless you happen to have superhumanly eclectic tastes or the milky heart of a Cheeryble brother, which I don't, then you just cannot escape from having likes and dislikes. Two performers whose work I find uncongenial, for instance, are Eddie Calvert and Russ Conway, who happen to be firm favourites in almost every household in Britain. The safest thing for me to do then, is to tiptoe quietly and just point out that nicely packaged, well recorded, loud-as-life LPs by both artists have just appeared. In "My Horn Goes Round The World", Columbia SCX3271 (mono 33SX1168), **Eddie Calvert** takes his trumpet on a global tour, blowing his way through *I Love Paris, Cossack Patrol, On A Slow Boat To China, Sidewalks Of Cuba* and half a dozen other geographically slanted melodies. **Russ Conway,** performing on what sounds like a vintage pub piano, strums his way through eighteen "Family Favourites" on another Columbia LP, SCX3272 (mono 33SX1169). It's all right for this kind of treatment to be accorded tunes like *Macnamara's Band*, even *The Teddy Bear's Picnic*—if the R.S.P.C.A. don't mind, but Conway's steam-hammer approach to Richard Rodgers' lilting *With A Song In My Heart* and Gershwin's *Love Is Here To Stay* exhausts my sense of charity. And while I'm being grumpy, let me deal with "Let's Dance", Mercury CMS18010, on which **David Carroll** and his orchestra, a sweetish dance-band with a very strict-tempo drummer, waffle through such items as *The Glow Worm, Let's Dance* (Benny Goodman's old signature tune), *The Trouble With Harry, Puerto Rican Pedlar* and *Dixie Dawn Patrol*. The soulful alto saxophone solo in *Dancing Tambourine*, a coy little novelty number, upset me badly, but I was impressed by some of the stereo effects. At one time it sounded as if somebody was scrubbing a doorstep. I never found out why.

For about twenty years now, **Les Brown** has been leading one of the world's finest dance orchestras, a band which has included one or two good jazz soloists and featured some pretty enterprising arrangements. "The Les Brown Story", Capitol ST1174 (mono T1174) presents new recordings of some of Les Brown's past successes. It starts off, aptly enough, with *I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm* in that smooth but swashbuckling arrangement; there are also nicely athletic versions of *Lover's Leap* and *Leap Frog*, as well as such items as *Sentimental Journey, Twilight Time* and *Mexican Hat Dance*. I spotted an error in the sleeve-note, however. *Midnight Sun* is not a "re-write" of *How High The Moon* and it was actually composed by Lionel Hampton, Sonny Burke doing the orchestration. A couple of months ago I was being a bit apathetic about **Les Baxter's** suite, "Love Is A Fabulous Thing". Far, far better is his treatment of the tunes from "South Pacific" on Capitol ST1012 (mono T1012), a really first-class LP. The stereo is splendid, the gimmicks—there are just a few, the percussion in *Happy Talk*, for instance—not overdone. *Bali Ha'i* and *Some Enchanted Evening* contain some particularly sensitive writing for woodwinds. Apart from some understandable lushness in the passages for strings, in fact, these orchestrations are marked by a pleasing sense of economy. Let me finish up with yet another good record, a really stunning one. No doubt Lilian Duff will be writing an authoritative review of "Buenas Noches Mi Amor", Philips SBBL549, by **Luis Alberto del Parana** and his **Trio Los Paraguayos,** but that need not stop me giving this stereo version a hearty welcome. Just as on "Ambassadors of Romance", the previous LP by this group (which I reviewed in October, 1959, Miss Duff in April, 1959), there is dazzling playing by the guitars and Indian harp, especially on *Misiones*, an instrumental track. The title-song is softly, romantically sung and there's a delightfully unsentimental performance of *Princesita de miel*, "the honey princess". For the most part these are marvellously gay tracks, especially the vivacious kissing song, *Aunque digas que no*. Even *Guadalupe*, apparently a song of rebuke for inconstancy, is full of colour and vitality. Without a doubt this is the most exhilarating stereo LP of the month. CHARLES FOX

BLUES

Women have always excelled in jazz and blues (as in any other arts, for that matter) as interpreters rather than creators. The occasional exceptions—Billie Holiday is a notable one—only prove the rule. Where "classic" blues are concerned, **Bessie Smith** certainly remains the greatest of all female singers, crystallising the style established by Ma Rainey. There is always tension between lyrics and music in Bessie's recordings. Joe Smith's beautiful trumpet obbligato makes *Baby Doll* the most complete performance to be found on "Empress Of The Blues, No. 3" (Philips BBE12233), yet the other three tracks—*J. C. Holmes Blues, Black Mountain Blues* and *Blue Spirit Blues*—are all excellent, helped along by the presence of such musicians as Louis Armstrong, James P. Johnson, Charlie Green, Fletcher Henderson and Clarence Williams. The lyrics of *Black Mountain Blues*, fiercely ironic, have long deserved inclusion in an anthology of Negro folk poetry. For different reasons Fontana TFE17136—*Hard Time Blues, Take Him Off My Mind, Pink Slip Blues* and *Deep Sea Blues*, all sung by **Ida Cox**—is of considerable interest. Ida Cox's voice, a little sleazy and less immense than Bessie Smith's, is an excellent vehicle for these particular blues. The performances are emotionally more strident than Bessie Smith's while the accompanying group, in which J. C. Higginbotham and Charlie Christian are outstanding, makes the record valuable even to those people who do not care for Miss Cox.

I have never liked the recordings which **Leadbelly** made with the Golden Gate Quartet, so I consider *Rock Island Line* and *Take This Hammer* to be among the least of this artist's performances. They come from two sessions—made on June 15th and 17th, 1940. It was at the first of these sessions, though, that Leadbelly recorded two other tracks—*Red Cross Store Blues* and *I'm On My Last Go-Round*, both magnificent solo performances. All four tracks can be found on an R.C.A. EP, RCX-146, an item essential to the "race" blues collector mainly because of these two solo recordings. *I'm On My Last Go-Round*, incidentally, was also recorded by Leadbelly for Musicraft as *Fannin' Street Blues* and for Folkways as *Cryin' For Me*, and other versions exist on other labels. Despite the fact that it contains two tracks by **Buddy Boy Hawkins** which have already been released in Britain, although both are now deleted, "The Male Blues, Vol. 5" (Jazz Collector EP JEL8) is of considerable value. That is because it includes *Stocking Feet Blues* and *That Blacksnake Moan* by **Blind Lemon Jefferson.** The latter is one of the most famous country blues, while *Stocking Feet Blues* is among

the finest of Jefferson's lesser-known performances. Jefferson's influence on Leadbelly is most obvious here; indeed the guitar playing on *Stocking Feet Blues* will be strangely familiar to Leadbelly fans.

"Chuck Willis Wails The Blues" (Fontana TFE17138) presents a singer with a slightly more convincing manner than that of many other present-day artists, although Willis reminds me of Nat Cole rather than Muddy Waters. **Pete Johnson**, on the other hand, is well below his old form on Top Rank JKR8009. The guitarist here, unmentioned on both sleeve and label, could easily be Leonard Ware. The best track, as it happens, is 66 *Stomp*, a performance which has nothing at all to do with either blues or boogie. But whereas Johnson seems to have been his worst enemy in this instance, another blues artist, **Champion Jack Dupree**, refuses (on London LTZ-K15171) to give in to an inimical backing, including occasional attacks from Pete Brown's alto sax. Throughout most of "Blues From The Gutter" Dupree manages to shout in the old style. *Goin' Down Slow*, in fact, is a very moving performance which does credit to Jimmy Oden's song. *Frankie and Johnny*, an utterly mixed-up track containing bits of *Betty and Dupree*, completes the confusion, starting off with one of Dupree's favourite piano introductions and building up to a rattling climax.

Big Bill Broonzy may be dead, but we are assured of many records by which to remember him. Of these, "The Blues" (Mercury MMB12003) must be one of the worst. Made in 1951 and not issued in the U.S. until 1958, this LP consists of tunes almost all of which are available in better versions on other records. We could easily do without the four titles on which a band backs up the singer, while, despite the presence of Bob Call, a fine blues pianist in the 1940's, *Hollerin' Blues* is insignificant. "Do You Remember Big Bill Broonzy?" (Mercury YEP9508) features a pleasing *In The Evening*, introduced by Bill with a little bit of speech. *Backwater Blues* is also good, but *Bill Bailey* and *Blue Tail Fly* have never appealed to me. All these titles were recorded in the late 1940's. Finally there is "An Evening With Big Bill Broonzy" on Tempo TAP23. These recordings, which I understand were made in Denmark in 1955, show Big Bill at his most eclectic. He was out to please a general audience, so the blues were bound to suffer. *This Train, Hey Bub, The Crawdad Song* and *Goodnight Irene* are the best tracks; the last-named happens to be the first Broonzy recording of Leadbelly's famous song that I've ever heard. If you just like Big Bill, then this is a good purchase; if you like Big Bill singing the blues, then I am not so certain.

ALEXIS KORNER

CONTINENTAL RECORDS

Whether or not **Yves Montand** is "the heart and hands of our time", as a French critic has called him, he is certainly a wonderful performer. Of all the generation that has sprung up since Chevalier's heyday he is the most versatile and accomplished, and even, if he does flog the social consciousness warhorse a bit, the one who suggests most movingly the dreams of working class humanity.

People familiar with his work—and who isn't, in some degree?—will find all facets of his remarkable talent in "Yves Montand" (Philips BBL7350). This is an LP selected from the one-man show in which he returned to the Paris music-hall, at the Théâtre de l'Etoile, in 1958. During an absence of five years he had made "The Wages of Fear" and half a dozen other films, and played in Sartre's adaptation of Arthur Miller's play, "The Crucible".

The collection now offered is by no means complete. I miss, for example, the macabre humour of *Sir Godfrey*. Enough remains to suggest M. Montand's range of mood and command of technique, based on a voice of exceptional *timbre* and expressiveness. Rather more than half of them might be described as gay, including such old favourites as *Les Grands Boulevards, Luna Park, A Paris* and *Mais qu'est-ce que j'ai?* In these he has expressed, as nobody else has, the hopes and fantasies of the simple fellow who cannot afford luxurious pleasures and finds his entertainment in amusement parks, casual flirtations and the fascinating life of the boulevards. Incidentally, one may note here that, though he doesn't write his own songs, he is said to have suggested some of them, and certainly shows a consistent social and political attitude in his choice.

Planter café, for example, might strike the superficial hearer as just an attractive lyric of the tropics, with a slow, sleepy rhythm to match the heat. But consider the words: "Planting coffee is not for the weak. You have to stoop down, and that is hard. The summer is hot and the sun weighs down. It's too much for one man. The boss can say what he wants . . . Carrying coffee to the ship's hold, you have to climb and pretend to smile", etc. Now turn to *Le Chat de la Voisine*. This begins, at great pace, with a laughing description of the cat who eats caviare and sleeps on an eiderdown quilt. But soon the singer is philosophising about the fate of man: "I didn't design man and his agony. I won't speak of the soldier who fears exchanging his leg for a medal, of the old man forced to the garbage cans through hunger. I won't praise the sweat that burns on people's brows, or speak of the workman lamenting the destruction of his fingers . . . It's better to glorify the neighbour's cat who eats well and purrs loudly". A dedicated Leftist, M. Montand, in American idiom, is always in there pitching. It's only fair to add that *Simple comme bonheur* and *Mon manège à moi* are exceptions—the first a charming little love song, with words by Jacques Prévert, the other a love song, too, with the happy rhythm of a merry-go-round. Which reminds me that Montand, as usual, is accompanied superbly by Bob Castella and his orchestra.

A final bouquet, for the notes on the sleeve; and one small brickbat for the recording. It was done at an actual show. Hence little pauses filled, in the theatre, by comic action and "business'. This is most obvious in that clever comic song, *Le Chef d'orchestra est amoureux*, where the conductor, with one eye on his score and the other on a sweetheart who only likes "Over the Waves", keeps interrupting Beethoven with a few bars of her favourite.

LILIAN DUFF.

STAGE AND SCREEN

Kiss Me, Kate (Porter). Soloists, chorus and orchestra cond. by Pembroke Davenport. (Capitol 12 in. Mono LP T1267—24s. 3d. plus 7s. 11d. P.T.).

Song of Norway (Grieg; Wright, Forrest). Soloists, chorus and orchestra cond. by Lehman Engel. (Philips 12 in. Mono LP BBL7346—27s. plus 8s. 9½d. P.T.).

Gigi and **My Fair Lady** (Loewe; Lerner). Jane Powell, Jan Peerce, Robert Merrill and Phil Harris with the R.C.A. Victor Symphony Orchestra and Chorale cond. by Johnny Green. (R.C.A. 12 in. ★Stere LP SF5047, Mono RD27148—27s. plus 8s. 9½d. P.T.

The presence of Alfred Drake in a musical is like that of Olivier in the straight theatre, an assurance of quality and excitement. He was the original Curley in *Oklahoma!*, the definitive Hajj in *Kismet* and, for me, the only Petruchio in *Kiss Me, Kate*—and what I would have given to see him opposite Katherine Hepburn in Guthrie's production of *The Shrew* itself! He has now re-recorded the Cole Porter score (1948), again with Patricia Morison, Lisa Kirk and Harold Lang, his co-stars in the original production. A second version was scarcely necessary when the first (Philips BBL7224) is still available and still so good. The "new high-fidelity recording" is certainly clear and rich and Capitol's fine chorus come through particularly well. Apart from that I still prefer the old record—eleven years have left their mark on Lisa Kirk's Bianca and not improved her rendering of "Always True to You". Patricia Morison is not my favourite leading lady, but you have only to compare her with Kathryn Grayson in the film version (M.G.M. C753) to recognise her authority in this role. You can now hear Harold Lang's dancer's feet as well as dancer's voice in "Bianca", but this is a small gain to put against the loss of spoken dialogue throughout the new record. Even Mr. Drake's triumphant shout, "Why, there's a wench—come on and kiss me, Kate", which linked Shakespeare's lyrics to Cole Porter's, has disappeared and I miss it. If, however, sound quality is a deciding factor, I assure you that Russell Bennett's orchestrations are virtually unchanged and this favourite score sounds as entertaining as ever.

Wright and Forrest successfully provided lyrics to the works of Borodin for their musical version of *Kismet*. For *Song of Norway* (1944) they struck up another posthumous partnership, this time with Grieg, and Milton Lazarus produced a libretto based on the composer's life. The result is distinctly patchy—acceptable in the lush concerted numbers where you cannot hear the words, varying from the banal to the abysmal elsewhere. Of course, there is always the concerto—to be flirted with in the early stages and thoroughly ruined for the finale. The Jones Beach Marine Theatre production, which was recorded in 1958, sounds opulent enough and the singing is excellent—if you want a record of this show, you will not be disappointed. (An H.M.V. issue in both mono and stereo is also scheduled.)

The R.C.A. disc is one of a pair issued in America under the title "An Evening with Lerner and Loewe". Judging by the one we have, I am glad that the *Paint Your Wagon* and *Brigadoon* sides have not so far appeared here. The performance is not only unsympathetic, but also dull and inept. If I wanted an example of false economy in record buying, I'd jump at this. Among the 7-inch discs is a Top Rank EP of Peter Greenwell at the piano with theatre orchestra playing a selection of his music for *The Crooked Mile* (JKP2035)—he makes it all sound just like Julian Slade. May Britt sings two of the songs from *The Blue Angel* (Top Rank 45-JAR-230) but, after Dietrich, who cares? Also on Top Rank you can find Norman Wisdom singing two songs from his new film, *Follow A Star* (45-JAR-246). For fans only.

MICHAEL COX.

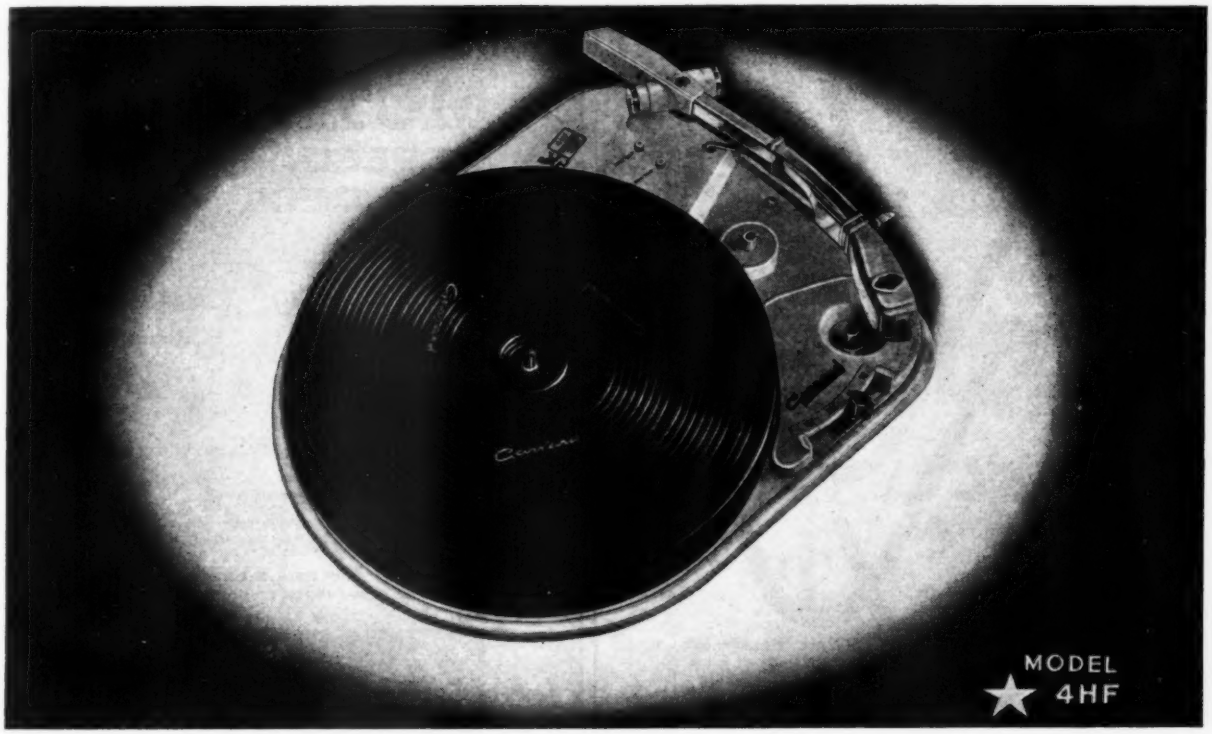
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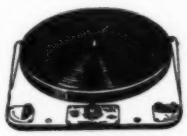
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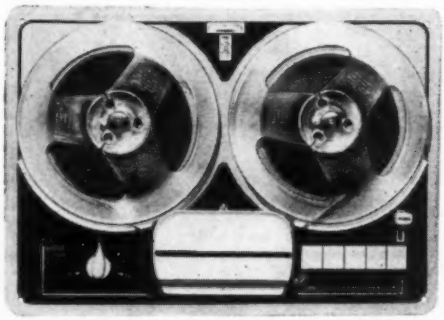
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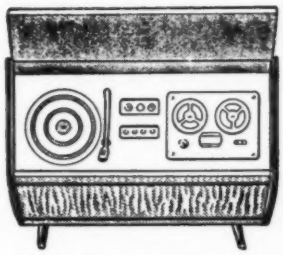
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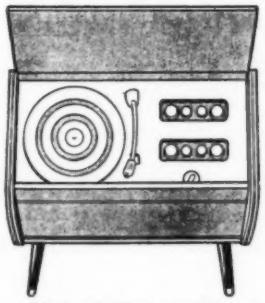


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JAZZ AND SWING

Reviewed by

CHARLES FOX, ALUN MORGAN AND OLIVER KING

Paul Barbarin and his Jazz Band
Weary Blues: It's A Long Way to Tipperary/Sister Kate: Tell Me Your Dreams.
(Tempo 7 in. EP EXA98—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

No one can say we are not getting a fair dose of original (to use the word loosely) New Orleans jazz these days, especially from Tempo, whose access to the American Southland catalogue enables them to provide music actually recorded in the Crescent City itself. This would be fine if there were more than a small handful of musicians in New Orleans who could still play the music. To read some "histories" of jazz, you would think that 40 or 50 years ago New Orleans was a kind of Athens, with every other person a great or potentially great musician. This is not the moment to discuss the rights or wrongs of this belief, but it remains inescapable that on the evidence of these Tempo records there are very few genuine jazz musicians working in New Orleans at the present time, and that those who are there scarcely warrant more than a passing mention.

Having got that off my chest, let me point out that this Paul Barbarin EP provides a perfect example of what I mean. The music is quite good but uneventful jazz in the New Orleans style (if that term has any real meaning). The rhythm section trudges rather too much, and the choice of tunes is unadventurous. (Even *Tipperary* has already been recorded by George Lewis.) These men have nothing new to say about these tunes in particular or the New Orleans style in general. O.K.

Charlie Barnet and his Orchestra
"Cherokee"
Cherokee: Redskin Rhumba: Serenade To May: Moten Swing: Pompton Turnpike: East Side, West Side (V)/Charleston Alley: Skyliner: Blue Juice: Code 288A: Southern Fried.
(Top Rank 12 in. LP 35/037—26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.)

Charlie Barnet has always led exciting and interesting bands. This set of recordings, made in the autumn of 1958, presents a virile, swinging studio orchestra (containing a high percentage of ex-Barnet employees) in re-creations of some of Barnet's successes. Several of the scores follow the originals very closely (*Skyliner*, for example); others have been refurbished by Bill Holman without losing the character of the earlier versions. As always, the low man amongst the soloists is Barnet himself, playing both soprano and tenor saxes in a rather unpleasant, hiccoughing way. Fortunately he is outweighed by the trumpeters (Clark Terry, Charlie Shavers and Jimmy Nottingham), pianist Nat Pierce, trombonist Billy Byers and tenor saxist Dick Hafer. Bunny Briggs sings the vocal on *East Side, West Side* and the band is kicked along in no uncertain fashion by Don Lamond and Terry Snyder, who alternate on drums. This, together with Woody Herman's Top Rank LP, also reviewed this month, is one of the few revivals on record where the new performances are sometimes superior to the originals. A.M.

Will Bradley and his Band
"Jazz For Sale"
Ja Da: I'm Comin' Virginia/Milenberg Joys: Victory Blues.
(Top Rank 7 in. EP JKP2007—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.)

Something seems to have gone wrong with the arrangement of the tracks on this EP. *Ja Da* certainly precedes *I'm Comin' Virginia*, and on the copy that was sent to me both these titles are to be found on Side 1, where the label affirms the tracks to be *Milenberg Joys* and *Victory Blues*. But these are small points compared to the quality of the music, and that, I'm happy to say, is pretty good. According to the sleeve-note, these recordings were made in New York soon after the war by a group consisting of Rex Stewart (trumpet), Will Bradley (trombone), Bill Stegmeyer (clarinet), Bud Freeman (tenor sax), Lou Stein (piano), Barry Galbraith (guitar), Trigger Alpert (bass) and Paul Kashian (drums).

I suppose it must be Rex Stewart who plays the lead trumpet, although I would only swear to his identity during the muted solo in *Victory Blues*. For most of the time he blows lustily and always to good effect, his phrasing rather Bixian—just, I suppose, as it always has been on the right occasion. The outstanding man on the session, however, is Bud Freeman, as cool and statesmanlike as ever, a master of diplomacy whenever he takes a solo. The rest of the group are less distinguished, although the rhythm section ticks over fairly well and Will Bradley contributes some vigorous sounds to the ensemble. At the beginning and close of *I'm Comin' Virginia*, incidentally, he copies Tommy Dorsey with great success. The recording quality is variable, with some uneasy moments coming halfway through *Milenberg Joys*. C.F.

Dave Brubeck Quartet
"Gone With The Wind"
Swanee River: The Lonesome Road: Georgia On My Mind: Camptown Races/Camptown Races: Short'nin' Bread: Basin Street Blues: Ol' Man River: Gone With The Wind.
(Fontana 12 in. LP TFL 5071—27s. plus 8s. 9½d. P.T.)
"In Europe—No 1"
Wonderful Copenhagen/Like Someone In Love.
(Fontana 7 in. EP TFE17196—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.)
"In Europe—No 2"
Tangerine Pts. 1 & 2.
(Fontana 7 in. EP TFE17198—9s. 3d. plus 3d. P.T.)

"Nice" is perhaps the fairest description of the music on Dave Brubeck's latest long-player; it is certainly neither adventurous nor particularly inventive. Perhaps the fault lies in the lack of a live audience, for, unlike some of Dave's recent releases, this was made in the studio—where so many of his performances have failed to take fire. *Basin Street Blues* is a perfect example of the perfunctoriness which pervades so much of the playing time. Desmond and Brubeck go through their solos in a highly professional manner, not to be faulted on technical grounds; Gene Wright marks time in steady, sure-fingered fashion, while Joe Morello's feather-weight drumming is unobtrusive. But the result is that nothing really happens. Neither Paul nor Dave has sufficient personality *per se* to carry such a performance in the manner of, say, Ben Webster or Stan Getz. Desmond does not play on either *Short'nin' Bread* or *Ol' Man River*, features for Morello and Wright respectively. In fact these are two of the best tracks, for Joe contrives to play the melody on his drums while Wright shows how fine a bass player he is when given a showcase of his own. Two versions of *Camptown Races* are included, but anyone expecting to find the degree of difference between takes which is apparent in, say, all of Charlie Parker's alternative masters, will be disappointed. Desmond is at his best on *Gone With The Wind*, where he introduces an element of surprise in the third chorus by playing a quotation from Sonny Rollins' *St. Thomas*.

Both EPs are taken from Fontana TFL5034, the Brubeck Quartet LP which was recorded at a concert in Copenhagen during March, 1958. The presence of an audience puts more life into the group's music, although the 3/4 against 4/4 time signatures utilised throughout *Wonderful Copenhagen* are blended less successfully than on *Someday My Prince Will Come* (Fontana TFL5017). I must single out Paul Desmond for praise on all three records. Despite his shortcomings where dynamics are concerned, he is one of the few really lyrical saxophonists to have arrived in the last decade. A.M.

George Brunies' All Stars
Bugle Call Rag: A Closer Walk With Thee (V)/Down In Jungle Town: Alice Blue Gown.
(Tempo 7 in. EP EXA96—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

This is not so much a case of New Orleans men playing the music they have always played in that city, as of exiles returning to meet some of the folks they left behind. Teddy Buckner's trumpet-playing is fairly sophisticated, the kind of thing you might expect from a man who is a stranger to the Crescent City, and it is George Brunies (has the trombonist reverted to the original spelling of his name?) who stands out as the voice of sanity in a rather cacaphonous mêlée. Brunies' fellow exile, Matty Matlock, behaves exactly like the proverbial local boy who has made good elsewhere. Roy Zimmerman (piano) and Chink Martin (string bass and tuba), on the other hand, both show that they at least were quite happy to stay put on the delta. The ensemble sound is ragged, even raw, and quite frankly I prefer *Bugle Call Rag* as the Friars Society Orchestra played it in 1922, or Ted Lewis in 1926. And both those groups had George Brunies on trombone, as it happened. O.K.

Mutt Carey's New Yorkers
"Papa Mutt—The Entertainer"
The Entertainer: Fidgety Feet/Indiana: Cake-Walking Babies.
(Esquire 7 in. EP EP220—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

These tracks, as the band's name suggests, were not recorded in New Orleans but in New York—in November, 1947. All the musicians, though, except for the trombonist, Jimmy Archey, and the pianists, Cliff Jackson and Hank Duncan, may be classed as New Orleanians. It may be very perverse of me, but I honestly consider that the three men I have named provide the most generally satisfactory solo work. All the same, the native Louisianians are good and the ensemble sound is mellow. The supple quality of Scott Joplin's great rag, too, *The Entertainer*, is brought out very nicely. But I would have enjoyed all four tracks much more, despite the somewhat well-worn repertoire, if the recordings from which they have been dubbed had not also sounded well-worn. O.K.

Buddy Collette and the Poll Winners
"Porgy and Bess"
Oh, Where Is My Bess?: My Man's Gone Now: Summertime: It Ain't Necessarily So/I've Got Plenty O' Nuttin': There's A Boat That's Leaving Soon For New York: Bess, You Is My Woman: A Woman Is A Sometime Thing.
(Top Rank 10 in. LP 25/003—18s. 10½d. plus 6s. 1½d. P.T.)

Yet another collection of melodies from George Gershwin's folk-opera, its issue no doubt inspired by Sam Goldwyn's "mammoth film", a film that still seems to be forthcoming as far as this country is concerned. Buddy Collette (who plays both flute and bass clarinet) gathered together a rather motley group: Pete Jolly (accordion), Gerald Wiggins (organ), Jim Hall (guitar), Red Callender (bass), Louie Bellson (drums); on the whole, though, this music is better than the instrumentation might

suggest. Pete Jolly is particularly skilful at concealing the grosser qualities of the accordion, while Collette himself performs aptly and daintily, making excellent use of the bass clarinet in *There's A Boat That's Leaving Soon*, the tune getting taken at a leisurely pace just for a change. Jim Hall adds a folksy touch to *A Woman Is A Sometime Thing*. C.F.

Bert Courtley Jazz Group

"Bertrand's Bugle"

Jones/Tenderly: Bertrand's Bugle.

(Decca 7 in. EP DFE6602—8s. 3d. plus 2s. 8½d. P.T.)

Bert Courtley's continuing improvement as a soloist is one of the more satisfying aspects of jazz in Britain. This record merely consolidates his position as one of our most important jazzmen, a trumpet player who has contrived to find an original style suited to his personality. Clark Terry remains Courtley's chief influence, but it would be quite inaccurate to call Bert a copyist, for he has much of his own to offer. *Bertrand's Bugle* is, in its way, every bit as effective as *New Blues For Old* and *Packet Of Blues*, two earlier compositions by Bert Courtley. The lengthy *Jones*, occupying one side of the record, is played by the Jazz Committee and includes a fine tenor solo from Don Rendell. *Tenderly* is given suitably sympathetic treatment, the rhythm section (Eddie Harvey, Pete Blannin and Jackie Dougan) laying down a supple, undulating background. The sleeve information is not quite correct. Rendell does not play on *Tenderly*, which, together with *Jones*, was recorded at the same session as the Jazz Committee's EP (Decca DFE6587). *Bertrand's Bugle*, with Eddie Taylor replacing Dougan, was made at the same time as the three titles on Courtley's previous EP, DFE6537. A.M.

Jack Delaney and his New Orleans Jazz Babies

Shine (V): Sidewalks Of New York/Hindustan: Till We Meet Again.

(Tempo 7 in. EP EXA100—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

Presumably these musicians are called "jazz babies" because Jack Delaney and his clarinettist, Pete Fountain, are products of the jazz "revival". But one can hardly describe Chink Martin (yes, here he is again!) as anything but a veteran—and a fine one, too—or Monk Hazel, for that matter. Both these men recorded during the 1920s with bands that were mellow, fresh and creative. This bunch, on the other hand, sounds exactly like twenty or thirty other groups, all equally competent, equally dull. The soloists are weak (like their senior colleagues they have nothing new to say) and their articulation is very rough, as in *Hindustan*. *Till We Meet Again* is probably the best track. At least it's not so raw as the others. O.K.

Harry Edison

"Harry Edison Swings Buck Clayton"

Memories For The Count: Come With Me: Critic's Delight/Oh! How I Hate To Get Up In The Afternoon: Medley (It All Depends On You: Charmaine: How Long Has This Been Going On: Makin' Whoopee).

(H.M.V. 12 in. LP CLP1321—25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.)

With the addition of trumpeter Buck Clayton, this is the identical group heard on Edison's earlier LP, "The Swinger" (H.M.V. CLP1277, reviewed last November). The assets and liabilities are repeated; into the former category fall the tenor solos of the talented Jimmy Forrest and the magnificent work of the Jimmy Jones-Freddie Greene-Joe Benjamin-Charlie Persip rhythm section; into the latter goes the frequently uninspired, repetitive playing of the leader. Clayton, of course, brings the balance down even further on the side of quality, for he is one of the most consistent musicians in jazz. In fact, Buck and Jimmy Forrest between them successfully carve Edison on nearly every track; Harry is content to rest on his laurels and string together his favourite phrases, already heard *ad nauseum* behind Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, etc. His contribution to the medley, *Makin' Whoopee*, is a compendium of clichés, whereas Clayton's *It All Depends On You* is a fresh experience. Forrest is superb during most of his solos, particularly on *Critic's Delight*, but his choice of *Charmaine* for his ballad leads to a rather dolorous situation.

I would rate this LP very highly as it stands, and would have placed it considerably higher had Edison showed more imagination. John Hammond's sleeve note is inadequate, for it fails to identify the various trumpet passages. (Clayton plays first on *Memories For The Count*, *Come With Me* and *Oh! How I Hate To Get Up*.) Neither does it make any reference to the unknown vibraphonist who plays in the first chorus of *Critic's Delight*. A.M.

Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges

"Back To Back"

Wabash Blues: Basin Street Blues: Beale Street Blues/Weary Blues: St. Louis Blues: Loveless Love: Royal Garden Blues.

(H.M.V. 12 in. LP CLP1316—25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.)

I'm ashamed to admit that I regularly underestimate Duke Ellington's stature as a pianist. But from time to time he makes a record that brings me up short, setting everything in its right perspective. This is such a record, the first, as it happens, that Ellington has made outside the setting of his own musicians since he sat in with Louis Armstrong, Charlie Shavers and Don Byas back in 1946. Only Johnny Hodges is on hand to represent the Ellington orchestra; the remainder of the group comprises Harry Edison, Les Spann (playing guitar only), Jo Jones and two bassists, Al Hall (on *Wabash Blues* and *Weary Blues*) and Sam Jones. The material consists of blues of varying bar-lengths and tinges. The first half of the record is rather boring, with Hodges sounding too bland to be true and Edison rummaging through his store of clichés. Only Ellington, adding his own brand of vinegar, gives these three tracks much life. With *Weary Blues*, however, we move into a new world. This performance, beautifully, almost transparently simple, has genuine claims to greatness. And *St. Louis Blues* is almost as good, although in a very different way, the emphasis here being upon rhythmic virtuosity.

Johnny Hodges continues to play just as he did when he first joined the Duke Ellington ensemble over thirty years ago, creating the same kind of rococo patterns in exactly the same way. But so poised is he, so magnificently infallible that it seems a little vulgar to expect originality as well. Perhaps Hodges' chief fault lies in a tendency to narcissism; one sometimes suspects that he may be admiring his solo at the very moment he is playing it. As for the others, Harry Edison sounds relaxed but blows too many familiar phrases—and unlike Hodges he cannot get away with it. The rhythm section is surprisingly inadequate. Les Spann takes a few good solos (his style seems modelled on Django Reinhardt's) but is less effective as a rhythm guitarist. The chief culprit, however, seems to be Jo Jones, whose drumming is much coyer than usual. The hero of the session, as I've already said, is Duke Ellington, whose playing throughout is consistently adventurous and always satisfying. As a pianist, Duke falls somewhere in between Willie "The Lion" Smith and Thelonious Monk, a delectable situation for any man to be in. C.F.

Art Farmer Quartet

"Portrait Of Art Farmer"

Back In The Cage: Stablemates: The Very Thought Of You: "And Now . . ."/Nita: By Myself: Too Late Now: Earth.

(Vogue 12 in. LP LAC12197—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

This is the most comprehensive and accurate portrait of trumpeter Art Farmer to be issued in Britain. It reveals with clarity all the facets of his playing, from the tender moods of the ballads to the swirling excitement (but always in good taste) of the up-tempo numbers. Almost inevitably a musician's temperament creeps into his music and I would say that, judged from this and many earlier LPs, Art Farmer is a very intelligent and mature person. He seldom, if ever, overreaches himself, preferring to play as well as he possibly can within his own limitations. In addition he refuses to tie himself down to one restricting style; instead he goes out of his way to look for fresh and challenging material. Here, for example, Farmer includes *Nita* by the talented but esoteric George Russell, and proceeds to turn it into a memorable performance. Listen also to the way he leads into his solos or, better still, try and guess what note or succession of notes he will use at the commencement of a solo. So many soloists drift into their choruses in a predictable manner, using either the tonic or the dominant as the first note, but I would defy anyone to forecast the shape and direction of Art's solo on the up-tempo "*And Now . . .*". Part of the success of the LP must be shared by the beautifully integrated rhythm section, comprising Hank Jones, Art's twin brother Addison on bass, and that giant among drummers, Roy Haynes. Consistency has always been the watchword so far as Art Farmer is concerned, but I doubt if even he has exceeded the standard displayed here on more than two or three occasions.

A.M.

Chico Hamilton Quintet

"The Ellington Suite"

Take The "A" Train and Perdido: Everything But You: Lucky So And So: Azure: I'm Beginning To See The Light/In A Mellow Tone: Just A-Sittin' And A Rockin': In A Sentimental Mood: Day Dream: It Don't Mean A Thing.

(Vogue 12 in. LP LAE12210—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

A friend of mine who lives in Dorset was telling me that he dotes just about equally on the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the music of the Chico Hamilton Quintet. But even he, I suspect, might find Chico's latest LP a twee and insufferable concoction. It consists of nine Duke Ellington tunes (plus Billy Strayhorn's *Take The "A" Train* and Juan Tizol's *Perdido*) arranged by Carson Smith for an instrumentation of tenor sax doubling alto, flute doubling alto sax, guitar, 'cello, bass and drums. In a few cases (*I'm Beginning To See The Light* and the opening track, for instance) a lissom, lightly swinging approach results in quite passable jazz. But the tarted-up versions of *Azure*, *In A Mellow Tone*, *In A Sentimental Mood* and *Day Dream* produce music that is both gooey and extravagant, pompous and sentimental. Fred Katz's 'cello playing really seems to have no place inside a jazz ensemble. The best solos come from Jim Hall, the guitarist, although even he sounds oddly muffled and inhibited. Buddy Collette constructs his tenor solos in a fashionably austere manner, while Paul Horn blows his flute quite nicely but plays alto solos that are just a bit too dainty and stilted. C.F.

Woody Herman and his Orchestra

"The Herd Rides Again"

Northwest Passage: Caldonia (V): Wildroot: The Good Earth: Blowin' Up A Storm: It's Coolin' Time/I Cover The Waterfront: Crazy Rhythm: Sinbad The Sailor: Fire Island: Black Orchid: Bijou.

(Top Rank 12 in. LP 35/038—26s. 4½d. plus 8s. 7½d. P.T.)

Blowin' Up A Storm—/It's Coolin' Time.

(Top Rank 7 in. 45 TR5012—5s. 3d. plus 1s. 9d. P.T.)

Recreations in jazz can be dangerous. We have, for instance, the evidence of so many dismal failures amongst the ranks of the Revivalists, whose spiritual home is New Orleans. This reunion of ex-Hermanites, however, which was recorded during the autumn of 1958 for the Everest label, was a success from the word go. With the exception of saxists Paul Quinichette and Sam Donahue, I believe all the men were once members of Herman Herds. The rhythm team sets the pace,

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CHANCES ARE IT SWINGS
Chances are; No such luck; It's not for me to say; Lilac chiffon; I just don't know; Who needs you; Everybody loves a lover; Come to me; My very good friend in the looking glass; You know how it is; A very special love; Teacher, teacher
(S) SF-5048 (M) RD-27149 RCA

DOWN THE RIVER WITH
The Delta Kings
Waiting for the Robert E. Lee; Beautiful Ohio; Ol' man river; Darkness on the Delta; Drifting and dreaming; Swanee River; Down by the riverside; Lazy river; Over the waves; Farewell blues
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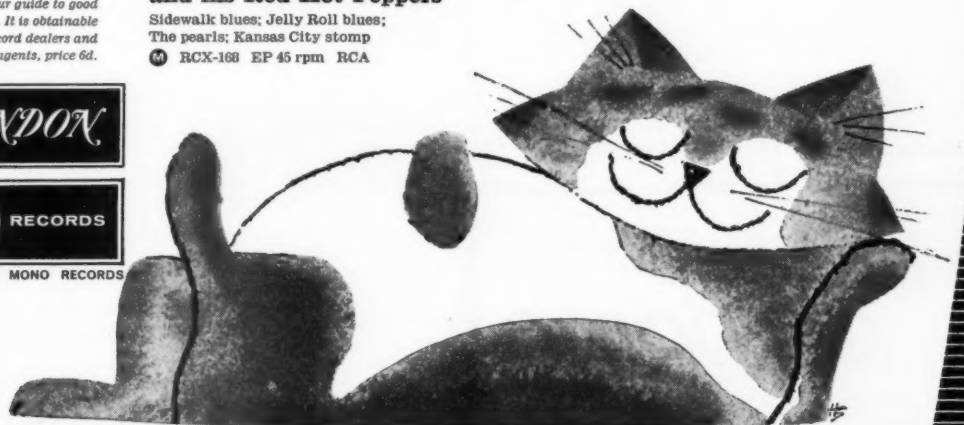
Ray Charles presents David Newman
FATHEAD
Hard times; Weird beard; Willow weep for me; Bill for Bennie; Sweet eyes; Fathead; Mean to me; Tin tin daeo
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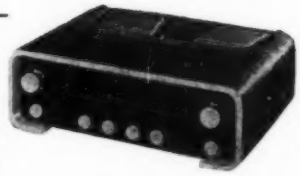
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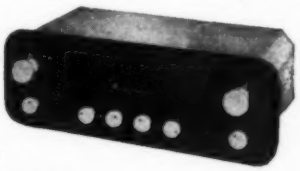
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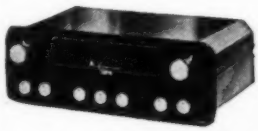


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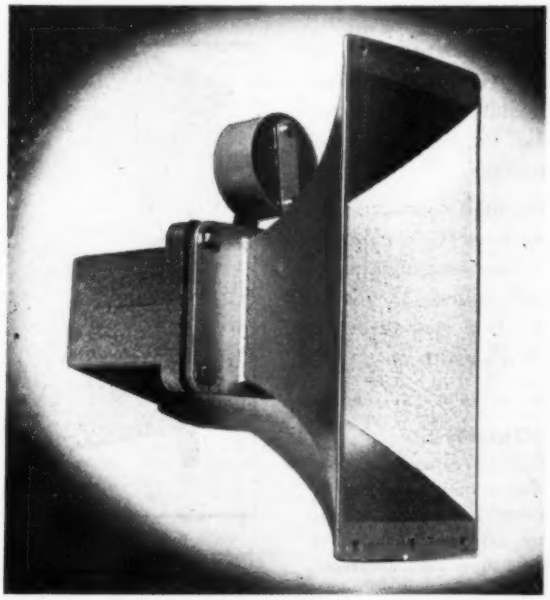
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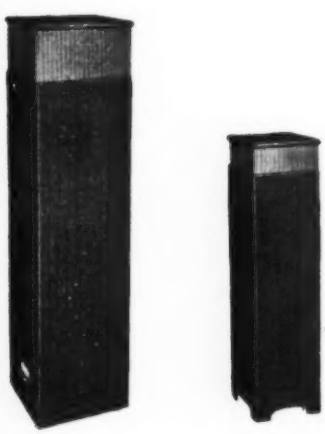
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helping to generate the tremendous feeling of excitement which is apparent throughout the entire programme; no section containing Chubby Jackson and Don Lamond could fail to swing, and the addition of Billy Bauer and Nat Pierce gives the unit that vital Herman sound. Most of the scoring follows the original pattern, although Nat Pierce and Fred Carlin have augmented the parts in places. (Ardent Herman enthusiasts will note the extension to that famous trumpet figure in *Caldonia*.) Al Cohn takes most of the tenor solos, in place of Flip Phillips, and I venture to suggest that some of these revitalised numbers are slightly superior to the original recordings. Not all of the tunes heard here were committed to wax by earlier Herds, although I have no doubt they formed part of the library. Trumpeter Bennie Harris wrote *It's Coolin' Time* (arranged by Al Cohn), Neal Hefti was responsible for *Black Orchid*, while Ralph Burns composed *Fire Island*. A notable omission is the Dizzy Gillespie tune, *Woody'n You*, which was written for Herman some fifteen years ago but never recorded by the band. *Sinbad The Sailor*, by Johnny Mandel, appears as a full band arrangement for the first time, although tenor saxist Herbie Steward made a quintet version of it for the Roost label (issued in Britain on Vogue) a decade ago. One of the stars of the record is Bobby Brookmeyer, who was given the unenviable task of playing the trombone solo on *Bijou*, a number closely associated with Bill Harris. Brookmeyer rose to the occasion magnificently and created a solo which is at once memorable yet in no way rests on Harris's original classic. It is a long time since I have enjoyed hearing such an exciting, virile orchestra. A.M.

Harry James Orchestra

"Harry's Choice!"

You're My Thrill: Willow Weep For Me: Blues For Sale: I Want A Little Girl/Moten Swing: Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans: Just For Fun: The New Two O'Clock Jump.
(Capitol 12 in. LP ★stereo ST1093, mono T1093—24s. 3d. plus 7s. 11d. P.T.)

Shiny Stockings: How Deep Is The Ocean: Slats: Blues Like: Cotton Tail/Too Close For Comfort: Kingsize Blues: M-Squad Theme: Deep Purple: Walkin': Get Off The Stand.
(M.G.M. 12 in. LP MGM-C795—25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.)

Cotton Tail: Kingsize Blues/Too Close for Comfort: M-Squad Theme.
(M.G.M. 7 in. EP MGM-EP713—8s. plus 2s. 7½d. P.T.)

"The James Sound"

Ciribiribin: You Made Me Love You/Trumpet Blues (And Cantabile): The Carnival Of Venice.
(Fontana 7 in. EP TFE17176—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.)

After almost twenty years of being looked upon as a kind of renegade, Harry James has just about worked his passage back to respectability. I was not the only critic to praise his last couple of records. ("The New James", incidentally, which I reviewed in a stereo version last November, is now available in mono on Capitol T1037.) And here are two more LPs which confirm the rather incredible fact that James is leading one of the most exhilarating big bands in the world today. I must admit that I prefer it to the present-day Count Basie orchestra—and not only because the soloists are better. It's a surprising situation, particularly when you realise that most of the band's scores are being written by Ernie Wilkins, and that their general pattern is one which Basie has made familiar.

There's little to choose between these two records. Both contain bold alto solos by Willie Smith (notably in *Slats*, *Get Off The Stand* and *New One O'Clock Jump*), although he is not heard half as much as he should be. Sam Firmature, the tenor-saxist, genuflects in Ben Webster's direction during the course of his longish solo on *Cotton Tail* (a performance that otherwise gets well away from the Duke Ellington original), but elsewhere plays in a fairly independent fashion, with some touches of Lester creeping in here and there. Ray Sims is a very competent trombonist, getting a healthy shouting quality in many of his solos.

Which leaves Harry James. It's true that some schmaltz leaks into *Deep Purple* and *How Deep Is The Ocean*, that a few of the modern phrases James throws into his solos sound a bit like Ziggy Elman playing *And The Angels Sing;* on the whole, though, James performs intelligently, sensitively and with a staggering technical facility. One often forgets how much he owes to Louis Armstrong, a debt that is especially evident in two trumpet features—*I Want A Little Girl* and *Do You Know What It Means To Miss New Orleans*. (*Kingsize Blues*, incidentally, one of the best tracks, has an eight-bar theme very like *I Want A Little Girl*.) *Blues Like* contains many echoes of James' playing on *Blue Mood*, the informal blues he recorded back in 1937 with Teddy Wilson, Red Norvo and John Simmons.

I was a little chastened, on listening to the Fontana EP, to find that a trumpet solo which I had once considered to be the height of bad taste (e.g. *Ciribiribin*) now sounds like the kind of thing Louis Armstrong blows in front of a big band. And even *Carnival Of Venice*, once you get past the brass-band-contest fireworks, has more to commend it than I should ever have dreamed possible. *Trumpet Blues*—all section work, without any solos—has dated remarkably little; like all the other tracks, it was recorded in the early 1940s. The poorer side of Harry James' career, however, can be found on *You Made Me Love You*. C.F.

Hank Jones

"The Talented Touch"

If I Love Again: My One And Only Love/You Are My Love: Blue Lights.
(Capitol 7 in. EP EAP1-1044—9s. 3d. plus 3s. 0½d. P.T.)

By no stretch of the imagination could Hank Jones be termed an adventurous pianist; rather he has concentrated on perfecting and refining a delicate, melodic style best described as "present-day Teddy Wilson". As an accompanist he is superb, and is always in demand on sessions featuring singers and instrumentalists. There are indications here that he was instructed to play closely to the melody in the opening and closing choruses, and to deviate little from the tune during his improvisations. A lesser artist might have turned in performances of little merit, but Jones has succeeded in tempering his normal jazz style to suit Capitol's requirements without losing his sense of good taste. In an entirely unpretentious way, this is one of the most charming records I've heard this month and serves as a good antidote after a rash of experimentalists. Unfortunately, Capitol has omitted all reference to Jones' colleagues on the sleeve and labels. Readers may like to know that the accompanists heard here comprise Barry Galbraith (guitar), Milt Hinton (bass) and Osie Johnson (drums). A.M.

Barney Kessel

"Some Like It Hot"

Some Like It Hot: I Wanna Be Loved By You: Stairway To The Stars: Sweet Sue: Runnin' Wild/Sweet Georgia Brown: Down Among The Sheltering Palms: I'm Through With Love: By The Beautiful Sea.
(Vogue 12 in. LP LAC12206—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Albums by guitarist Barney Kessel are being issued thick and fast on the Vogue label; this LP of tunes from the Marilyn Monroe-Tony Curtis film comes hard on the heels of "The Poll Winners Ride Again" (LAC12186), while the latest Vogue supplement announces a further Kessel album comprising music from the modernised "Carmen". For "Some Like It Hot" Barney has enlisted the aid of such stalwarts as Jimmy Rowles, Monty Budwig and Shelly Manne, added the dependable Jack Marshall on rhythm guitar, and brought in a two-piece front line. On trumpet is Joe Gordon, late of the Dizzy Gillespie big band, whose fiery, crackling style is a joy to hear. Gordon's partner is Art Pepper, who breaks new ground on record by playing alto, tenor and clarinet; his work on the last-named instrument convinces me that he could easily become the most important new clarinettist in jazz. As Kessel notes on the sleeve, the overall feeling is akin to that of the "To Swing Or Not To Swing" album (LAC12058); both LPs use similar instrumentation and each imparts an aura of happiness. Kessel solos with his usual masterful ease, running full, rich chords and tracing singing, melodic lines in a manner which marks him as the best guitar soloist since Charlie Christian. The other musicians on the date are completely in accord with Barney and the result is one of the most joyful and uncomplicated LPs of recent months. Kessel proves yet again that jazz can be swinging, tasteful, inventive and good fun, all at the same time. A.M.

George Lewis

Till We Meet Again: George Lewis Talks/Should I?: Darkness On The Delta (V).
(Tempo 7 in. EP EXA101—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

The first track on each side is played by George Lewis with Dick Oxtot's Traditional Jazz Quartet. Perhaps that's why the 1930 film-song, *Should I?*, and the 1919 hit, *Till We Meet Again*, are given as "traditional" instead of composed by Arthur Freed (with Nacio Herb Brown) and Richard Whiting respectively. But then I see that the 1933 song, *Darkness On The Delta*, performed here by George Lewis's New Orleans Rhythm Boys, is also shown as being a "traditional" song. Actually it was written by Messrs. Symes, Neiburg and Levinson.

The cornettist on the Quartet tracks is P. T. Stanton, of whom I know (and the sleeve-note tells me) nothing. He has a nice tone, however, and fills in very efficiently behind George Lewis, who sounds just the same as ever, mistakes and all. Lewis's little speech at the end of the first side is quite interesting, and there is no questioning the genuine humility of the man. The choice of numbers is good, and the unusual instrumentation of cornet, clarinet, banjo and string bass in the Quartet makes these performances among the most pleasing I've heard this month. O.K.

Gerry Mulligan Quartet

"Reunion With Chet Baker"

Reunion: When Your Lover Has Gone: Stardust: My Heart Belongs To Daddy/Jersey Bounce: Surrey With The Fringe On Top: Travellin' Light: Ornithology.
(Vogue 12 in. LP ★Stereo SEA5007; Mono LAE12185—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Gerry Mulligan rarely lets one down. He has mannerisms, but seldom has to make them the basis of a solo. The front-line of any Mulligan group is usually a place where ideas—new ones, too—are tossed to and fro, from this musician to that. This new LP is no exception. Partnering Mulligan on the session (made in December 1957) was Chet Baker, the trumpet-player with the Quartet when the original versions of these tunes were recorded. Now I've often criticised Baker for the feebleness of his playing, but when working alongside Mulligan he seems to spruce himself up. Certainly he performs as excellently here as he did with the earlier Mulligan quartet. *Ornithology* is the best track, Mulligan himself charging ahead gaily above the potent rhythm section (Henry Grimes, bass, and Dave Bailey, drums). Almost as good is *Surrey With The Fringe On Top*. The first side of the LP, although decidedly the weaker half, does include some of Chet Baker's best playing—a nicely lyrical solo in *Stardust*. On the whole, though, the performances on this side sound slightly too complacent.

Not the least remarkable aspect of this record is its ineffably silly sleeve-note, the work of a member of the American medical profession. "His (Mulligan's) music", it says at one point, "although dynamically balanced to a fault, remains singularly polymorphic and portends at all times an exciting nascency into

directions yet unnamed". Crisply put, eh? And how about: "The evocative tensions that interweavingly and multi-thematically present both themselves and their infinitely possible resolutions, so tangibly sift through its textured dimensionality that it is difficult to believe the vertical moment will be invariantly reconciled to the horizontal totality". What is it Philip the Bastard says to Queen Elinor (in *King John*)? "Zounds! I was never so bethumped with words Since first I call'd my brother's father dad". C.F.

Lennie Niehaus

"Vol. 1: The Quintet"

I Remember You: Poinciana: Whose Blues: Prime Rib: I Should Care: Inside Out/I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me: You Stepped Out Of A Dream: I'll Take Romance: Happy Times: Day By Day: Bottoms Up.

(Vogue 12 in. LP LAC12167—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Eight of these tracks first appeared here some years ago as a ten-inch LP (Vogue LDC120); they were, in fact, the first Niehaus titles to be issued in Britain and their impact was considerable. Those original tracks have worn well, for I am of the opinion that Niehaus has never bettered such performances as *Whose Blues* and *I Remember You*, on which his clear tone, unlimited instrumental control and seemingly endless flow of ideas are the envy of many saxophonists. His colleagues on the earlier sessions were Jack Montrose, the late Bob Gordon, Monty Budwig and Shelly Manne. By comparison, the new titles, *Can't Believe*, *Poinciana*, *Happy Times* and *I Should Care*, are weaker, although there are some good solos from the revised quintet personnel (Niehaus, Stu Williamson, Hamp Hawes, Red Mitchell and Manne). Lennie has never fulfilled the promise inherent in his first recorded solos; like Herb Geller, he remains a useful jazzman to employ on a date provided his solos are kept within sensible lengths. A.M.

Original Barnstormers Spasm Band

Shine: Tiger Rag/Stormin' The Barn: That's All There Is (V).
Tempo 7 in. EP EXA95—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)
Stormin' The Barn/That's All There Is (V).
Tempo 45 45/A168—4s. 9d. plus 1s. 7d. P.T.)

"Jazz is happy music; we play it that way because we feel happy when we play," declares Brian Rust in the sleeve-note of the EP, a sleeve-note in which he also traces the lineage of the Barnstormers back to the spasm bands of New Orleans. And just to prove that Brian Rust can practise what he preaches, you turn the sleeve over and there he is on the front, sitting behind the drums, looking a slightly more studious version of Tony Sbarbaro.

Now, I've always had a great liking for the Memphis Jug Band, Cannon's Jug Stompers and similar groups of the 1920s, as well as the washboard bands which flourished then and later. But to create this kind of music, a music which is much more subtle than at first it appears, you need something more than enthusiasm. As it is, the Barnstormers produce the kind of home-spun jazz that you might expect to come across in the Lower Remove. The kazoo-playing, alas, is both out-of-tune and excessively corny. Luckily Johnny Wadley blows his harmonica more efficiently, while Brian Rust drums and thwacks his washboard as if Calvin Coolidge was still in the White House. C.F.

Max Roach 4 + 1

Ezz-Thetic: Woodyn' You: Mr. X/Yardbird Suite: Confirmation: Apres-Vous: Body And Soul: Billie's Bounce.

(Mercury 12 in. LP MMB12009—25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.)

"A non-stop talker who finally forces the crowd around him into silence," wrote Whitney Balliett in *The New Yorker* a few months ago. He was referring to Max Roach, a great drummer but a musician who is rarely content to take a back seat. On every track of this LP, with the exception of *Body And Soul* (and surely it was only the drowsy tempo which saved us here), Roach takes a fairly lengthy solo.

Apart from these idiosyncrasies, this LP is excellent. Three separate groups are involved, with only Roach and the trumpeter Kinny Dorham present throughout. Sonny Rollins, Ray Bryant and George Morrow are the tenor saxist, pianist and bassist on *Ezz-thetic*, *Woodyn' You*, *Mr. X* and *Body And Soul* (all made in the autumn of 1956). Hank Mobley plays tenor sax and the pianist drops out on *Yardbird Suite*, *Confirmation* and *Après-Vous* (a Charlie Parker blues, originally called *Au Privave*), all dating from December 1957. Once again there is no pianist on *Billie's Bounce* (a 1958 recording); the tenor player here is George Coleman, the bassist Nelson Boyd.

Rollins—gritty but eloquent—dominates the earliest tracks. On *Mr. X* he even succeeds in creating a lucid, intelligent solo while playing at a fastish lick. There is more than a hint of Coleman Hawkins' approach in his solo on *Body And Soul*, a track which also contains half-a-chorus of sensitive, rather cloudy trumpet playing by Kinny Dorham. It is Dorham, as a matter of fact, who is the outstanding soloist on the remaining tracks, his playing consistently lyrical and assured—especially in *Billie's Bounce*. Hank Mobley sounds like a muddier version of Rollins, with a decidedly barren set of ideas. Much more impressive, in fact, is the lesser-known George Coleman. But something worthwhile can be found on all these tracks. And Ray Bryant's crisp piano solos are worth a special mention. C.F.

Howard Roberts

"Good Pickin's"

Will You Still Be Mine: Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea/Lover Man: All The Things You Are.

(H.M.V. 7 in EP 7EG8550—8s. plus 2s. 7½d. P.T.)

This is a delightful record. Howard Roberts, a self-taught guitarist who came into jazz via "country and Western music", has been active on the West Coast for some years, yet he is a musician one tends to forget about, probably because he doesn't pop up on a new LP each month. The only previous record issued here under his own name is "Mr. Roberts Plays Guitar" (Columbia 33C9038), reviewed in October, 1957. Anyway, Roberts really is an uncommonly sensitive and vivacious performer, capable of weaving an agile and dynamic melodic line (*Will You Still Be Mine* happens to be a fine example), a line very different from the monotonous procession of quavers or semi-quavers which many more fashionable guitarists often seem to foist upon us. At slower tempi his playing possesses a ripeness, an unabashed romanticism, that he never seeks to disguise.

Bill Holman can be heard playing tenor sax (a trifle grittily, I fear) in *Will You Still Be Mine;* in fact the theme at the beginning of this track has been scored rather neatly for tenor and guitar in unison. Pete Jolly is the pianist, an admirable choice for this particular session, and plays crisp, incisive solos on several tracks. There is also some diverting interplay between guitar and piano in *All The Things You Are.* C.F.

Johnny St. Cyr and his Hot Five

Bye And Bye (V): **Careless Love/Sister Kate: Darktown Strutters' Ball** (V).
(Tempo 7 in. EP EXA99—9s. 9½d plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

The banjoist with the King Oliver Band (1923), Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven (1925-1927) and Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers (1926), St. Cyr is here the nominal leader of a small band which bears a strong similarity to the Paul Barbarin group reviewed earlier. Barbarin is again the drummer and Willie Humphrey the clarinettist. *Bye And Bye* has a pleasant ensemble sound, while *Careless Love* bounces along at a bright medium tempo. The other two tracks contain versions of well-tried (and rather trying) old tunes. The rhythm throughout is rather of the oom-pah variety, mainly because of dull vamping by the pianist, Jeannette Kimball, although she shows herself to be a fair soloist. Johnny St. Cyr is as fine a banjoist here as ever he was (which was fine indeed), but he gets little chance to shine. As with the Barbarin record, there is nothing outstanding to be heard; it is just another average example of home-grown New Orleans jazz. O.K.

Johnny Smith and his New Quartet

It Never Entered My Mind: Samba: Black Is The Colour Of My True Love's Hair: Pawn Ticket: 'S Wonderful/You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To: Blue Lights: Montage: Baga' Groove: 'Round About Midnight.

(Vogue 12 in. LP LAE12202—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

With an instrumentation of vibes, guitar, bass and drums, Johnny Smith's new quartet sounds, almost inevitably, like a copy of the MJQ, especially when Smith is playing chords behind Johnny Rae's vibraphone solos. This music is thoroughly pleasant and superbly played by four seasoned professionals; it falls neatly between the stools occupied by outright jazz and cocktail-lounge frippery. The well-chosen programme includes such jazz tunes as *Pawn Ticket* (by Ray Bryant), Gigi Gryce's *Blue Lights* and Milt Jackson's *Bags' Groove*, as well as the wistful folk-song, *Black Is The Colour Of My True Love's Hair*. For what he has set out to do Smith deserves praise, but readers looking for records of contemporary *jazz* guitar are referred to LPs by Barney Kessel, Jimmy Raney, Kenny Burrell, Billy Bauer, etc.
A.M.

Sonny Stitt Quartet/Quintet

Afterwards: If I Should Lose You: Blues For Bobby: My Melancholy Baby/There Will Never Be Another You: The Nearness Of You: Biscuit Mix: Yesterdays.

(Vogue 12 in. LP LAE12190—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Playing alto sax throughout this LP, Sonny Stitt is backed up on the first four titles by Hank Jones, Wendell Marshall and Shadow Wilson. This is, in fact, the personnel which was heard on Sonny's earlier Vogue LP (LAE12191, reviewed by Charles Fox last November) and the resultant music is of the same quality. It is Stitt who leads the group, springing to the attack with searing, Parker-like phrases, and generally bustling ahead of the efficient rhythm section. *Afterwards* is a typical Parker tune, played up-tempo with such authority and swaggering flamboyance that it gives credence to the story about Parker saying to Stitt, "I'm leaving you the key to the kingdom", shortly before his death. Even the ballads are played with an intensity seldom found in the work of any other saxophonist. Indeed *If I Should Lose You* is one of Stitt's finest performances in this vein.

For the second four titles Freddie Greene was added to make the quartet into a quintet, not altogether a wise move on the part of the A & R man responsible. Despite his excellence in the context of Count Basie's orchestra, Freddie can upset the balance of a more modern rhythm section by the very nature of his rock-steady, four-in-a-bar chording. His presence on Vogue LAE12128, with a Gerry Mulligan-led sax section, was a definite liability, although nothing by comparison with the *faux pas* committed when he was included in a section with Philly Joe Jones on Parlophone PMC1095. Freddie gets less in the way of this Stitt LP, principally because Shadow Wilson stresses the beat more than most modern drummers. Nevertheless, the chunky sound of the section means that Sonny is more earthbound on the quintet tracks, and accordingly he does not take off on such long, soaring flights of imagination.
A.M.

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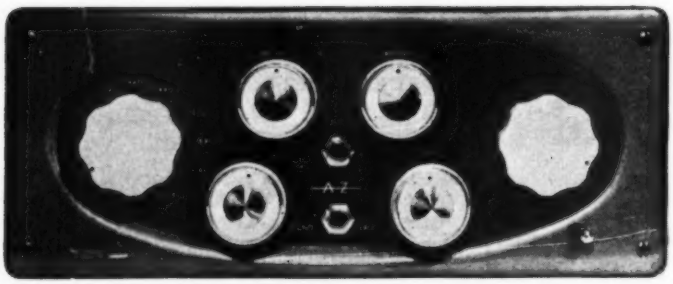
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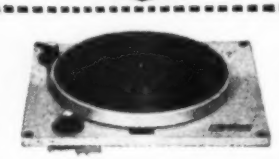
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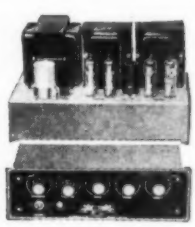
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(Vogue 12 in. LP LAE12211—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Six of these tracks are reissues from previous LPs, although some tape-editing has been carried out in order to shorten the original performances. For example, *Disc Jockey Jump* (from the Gerry Mulligan Song Book, Vol. 1, LAE12128) has had the solos by Al Cohn, Allen Eager and Lee Konitz removed, despite what the sleeve says. *Georgia On My Mind*, featuring the alto of Art Pepper, comes from the "Hoagy Sings Carmichael" LP (VA160122), with the difference that Carmichael's original vocal has been omitted (I presume the voice and instrumental accompaniment were recorded separately) and replaced by a further alto solo. The same sort of thing has happened with *Hooray For Love*, on which Bud Shank's baritone sax substitutes for the voice of singer David Allen. *Dearly Beloved* is, in all probability, yet another case of adroit tape surgery, but in this case I cannot trace the original; this present version features Frank Rosolino on trombone. *Bunny* is heard in its unadulterated form; again showcasing the passionate alto playing of Pepper, this was recorded at the session which produced *Popo* ("Jazz West Coast", Vol. 4—Vogue LAE12177).

Not surprisingly the overall standard is uneven, ranging from the excellence of Gil Evans' *Lester Leaps In* and Cy Touff's *What Am I Here For?* to the arid dreariness of Leith Stevens' film music, *Jimmy's Theme*. And some of the so-called "big bands" fail to qualify for that description. Both *What Am I Here For?* and *Let Me See* are played by octets.

A.M.

Lester Young

"Memorial Album, Volume 2"
Easy Does It (Count Basie Orchestra): **Lady Be Good** (Quintet): **Jump For Me: Hollywood Jump: Louisiana: Moten Swing/Tickle-Toe: 12th Street Rag: Let Me See: I Never Knew: Song Of The Islands: I Left My Baby** (V Jimmy Rushing) (Orchestra).
(Fontana 12 in. LP TFL5065—27s. plus 8s. 9½d. P.T.)

"The Greatest"
Sunday: Jumping With Symphony Sid: No Eyes Blues: Sax-O-Be-Bop: On The Sunny Side Of The Street: Jumpin' At The Woodside: One O'Clock Jump/Jumpin' At Mesner's: These Foolish Things: It's Only A Paper Moon: Lover Come Back To Me: S. M. Blues: Just Coolin': Easy Does It.
(Vogue 12 in. LP LAE12194—27s. 6d. plus 8s. 11½d. P.T.)

Although Lester Young inspired the "cool" era of jazz, an era that coincided with the 1950s, and spawned imitators who sometimes preferred a squint to a stare, it would be foolish to imagine that his own playing lacked passion. There is nothing cold or remote about a Lester Young solo. Where his playing differs from the more direct, rather more gushing approach of Coleman Hawkins, is in its possession of a quality of contained excitement, the emotion firmly gripped within the formal conception.

These two LPs cover a period of eleven years, stretching from Lester's first recording session in 1936 (when he made *Lady Be Good*) up to 1947. The Fontana disc (devoted entirely to performances with Count Basie) includes a few really dazzling tracks, notably *Tickle-Toe*, *Louisiana* and *I Never Knew*, three items that come from a single session, recorded in March 1940. In addition there is the superb *Lady Be Good* and the delicate, almost exquisite, *Song Of The Islands*. This LP in fact, is every bit as essential to the conscientious jazz collector as the first volume (Fontana TFL5064, reviewed by Alun Morgan last December). It must be pointed out, though, that on two of the tracks (*Jump For Me* and *Moten Swing*) Lester cannot be heard at all, the tenor solos being taken by Buddy Tate. (It is Tate, incidentally, who plays the first tenor solo in *Let Me See*.) Three of the recordings—*Easy Does It*, *Hollywood Jump* and *Let Me See*—have not previously been issued in this country.

The Vogue LP, drawn from the Aladdin catalogue, forms a sequel to "Masterpieces of the President" (Vogue LAE12016), reviewed in the August, 1956, issue of THE GRAMOPHONE. About two-thirds of the titles have already appeared here on either the Vogue, Esquire or Felsted labels. A couple of the performances, *Jumpin' At Mesners* and *These Foolish Things* (both recorded in 1945), catch Lester at his finest, especially the latter track, the tenor-player being accompanied by Vic Dickenson, Dodo Marmarosa, Freddie Green, Red Callender and Henry Green. Some of the subsequent recordings, however, notably those on the first side, are far less enchanting. Even where Lester displays some breadth of imagination he gets handicapped by a stodgy rhythm section and Shorts McConnell's erratic trumpet playing. On *No Eyes Blues*, however, Lester succeeded in conquering all obstacles and evolves a fine set of blues choruses. This track also contains some nicely astringent playing by Argonne Thornton, a pianist who has sometimes been confused with Bud Powell. Thornton also takes enterprising solos on several other tracks. On the whole, though, there is a flickering rather than a consistent brilliance about most of the performances on this LP. C.F.

Teddy Wilson Trio

"Mr Wilson And Mr. Gershwin"
Liza: Nice Work If You Can Get It: Lady Be Good: Somebody Loves Me: But Not For Me: I Got Rhythm/Man I Love: Bess, You Is My Woman Now: Embraceable You: Love Is Here To Stay: I've Got A Crush On You: Summertime.
(Philips 12 in. LP BBL7344—27s. plus 8s. 9½d. P.T.)

"Jazz Olympus Series"
China Boy: I Can't Get Started/I Surrender Dear: These Foolish Things.
(Philips 7 in. EP BBE12284—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.)

Eighteen years separate the recording of these two Teddy Wilson albums, but the styles of the music are identical. Some years ago Teddy hit on a manner of playing which suited him and he has seen no reason for change, despite the jazz revolution engineered by Parker and Gillespie. He never forgets his possession of two hands nor the need for tasteful melody; occasionally his playing strays close to the dreamy style adopted by the local tea-shoppe tinkler, but he never loses his elegance. Perfectly poised at all times, Wilson is the epitome of gentlemanliness. He is at his best on the 1959-vintage LP (his first under a new contract signed with American Columbia), for the all-Gershwin programme is well suited to his temperament. In fact, Gershwin and Wilson go hand in hand, for it might be said that the two are exact contemporaries (both reached their artistic peaks at about the same time). There is a wholly delightful version of *Bess You Is My Woman Now;* less adventurous than the late Dick Twardzik's treatment (Vogue), it succeeds in bringing out the appealing quality of the song. There is not a poor track on the record and my only complaint concerns the inclusion of applause from what sounds like a small studio audience. The pattering hand-claps which occur after each number tend to break the mood and lessens the feeling of intimacy which Teddy conjures up so well. My copy of the sleeve is not yet to hand and I have no exact information about the two accompanists who perform so sympathetically, but I have reason to believe that Arvell Shaw is on bass and the Swedish jazzman Nils-Bertil Dahlander (or Bert Dale) is behind the drums. A.M.

IN BRIEF

Cab Calloway. *Minnie The Moocher* (V): *The Jumpin' Jive* (V)/*Eadie Was A Lady* (V): *Miss Otis Regrets* (V). (Fontana 7 in. EP TFE17216—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.)

Cab Calloway has always used good musicians. The trouble has been that they can seldom make themselves heard behind the exuberant singing of this leather-throated leader. That same old trouble crops up here. The only solo spots, in fact, are eight bars from Chu Berry's tenor sax (plus eight more apiece from trumpet and trombone) in *The Jumpin' Jive* and some sinister trumpet interjections in *Minnie The Moocher*. But for people who, like myself, have always nursed a soft spot for his Hi-De-Highness of Ho-De-Ho the prospect is not so bleak. This *Minnie The Moocher*, incidentally, doesn't sound like the 1931 version and is probably the one recorded in 1942. The other tracks all date from the 1930s. C.F.

Dukes of Dixieland. Vol. 1. *South Rampart Street Parade: Down Yonder: Washington And Lee Swing: Robert E. Lee: Toot Toot Tootsie: Tailgate Ramble* (V): *Farewell Blues/High Society: Clarinet Marmalade: When My Sugar Walks Down The Street* (V): *There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight: At The Darktown Strutters Ball: Alabama Jubilee* (V). (Audio Fidelity 12 in. LP ★stereo AFSD5823—35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.; Mono AFLP1823—33s. 2½d. plus 10s. 9½d. P.T.)
Vol. 2. *Sweet Georgia Brown: Slide, Frog, Slide: Dill Pickles: Basin Street Blues* (V): *My Blue Heaven* (V): *Sheik Of Araby/Mama Don' 'Low* (V): *Mocking Bird: Limehouse Blues: That Da Da Strain: After You've Gone* (V): *Ain't She Sweet* (V). (Audio Fidelity 12 in. LP ★stereo AFSD5840—35s. 5½d. plus 11s. 6½d. P.T.; Mono AFLP1840—33s. 2½d. plus 10s. 9½d. P.T.)

The stereo version of Volume 1 was reviewed by Malcolm Macdonald under "Stereo Pops" in THE GRAMOPHONE for May, 1959. This record has now been issued in monophonic form, together with a second volume. The balance of the group, as Mr. Macdonald pointed out, is a little odd, particularly when Jac Assunto, the banjoist, joins in on second trombone. The stereo impact, however, is fairly dynamic. As for the music, it is mostly the brasher kind of Dixieland jazz, complete with tuba and banjo, competently performed but with too much stress laid upon the cornier aspects of the idiom. None of the solo-playing rises above an amateurish happy-go-lucky level. C.F.

Mr. Dixie and his Gang. "Vive la Dixie". *The Third Man: Oh, Mein Papa/Sur le pont d'Avignon: Vladivostok.* (Top Rank 7 in. EP JKP2014—9s. 3d. plus 3s. P.T.).

"Mr. Dixie", it seems, is David Bee. Or so the sleeve-note tells us, a note written tongue-in-cheek and reading like an extension of a well-known aperitif advertisement. Bee's group is made up of good Dixie men who display much more virility and drive than many of their colleagues from the alleged birthplace of jazz. At least they sound happy; consequently I was happy to listen to them. Some of the playing is pure corn, but what's wrong with corn—provided it's good corn? And full marks to Mr. Dixie for his bold choice of numbers. What other jazz versions of these tunes do you know? O.K.

Firehouse Five Plus Two. *12th Street Rag: Wabash Blues/Sweet Georgia Brown* (V): *Lonesome Mama Blues.* (Good Time Jazz 7 in. EP EPG1259—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.) *Just A Stomp At Twilight: Sobbin' Blues/Fire Chief Rag: Who Walks In When I Walk Out?* (Good Time Jazz 7 in. EP EPG1260—9s. 9½d. plus 3s. 2½d. P.T.)

All these tracks have been issued here before, either on 78s. or LP, for they date from 1950 and 1951. There's not much I can add to what I've already said about this group. I can only repeat that here is another instance of men enjoying themselves, even if the jazz they make is sometimes a bit corny. O.K.

Ian Menzies and his New Stompers. *Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight* (V)/*Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?* (V). (Nixa 45/78 NJ2023—4s. 9d. plus 1s. 7d. P.T.)

Both of these numbers, complete with revised lyrics, are belted out in the style of a music-hall entertainer from the "Good Old Days" by a girl whose name is given nowhere on the label. She fits into the mood of the numbers quite well, but there is little chance for the band to stretch its legs. I take it this was intended principally for the juke-box trade. It hasn't much appeal as jazz. O.K.

Anita O'Day. "Anita O'Day Swings Cole Porter with Billy May". *Just One Of Those Things: You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To: Easy To Love: I Get A Kick Out Of You: All Of You: Love For Sale/Get Out Of Town: I've Got You Under My Skin: Night And Day: It's De Lovely: I Love You: What Is This Thing Called Love* (H.M.V. 12 in. LP CLP1332—25s. 9d. plus 8s. 4½d. P.T.)

Anita O'Day approaches Cole Porter's words and music with less respect than Ella Fitzgerald did. Her version of *Body And Soul*, for instance, is as free as it is torrid. Sometimes the mannerisms get in the way, but there are memorable performances of *You'd Be So Nice, All Of You, Get Out Of Town, It's De Lovely* and *Love For Sale*. The irony of the last-named song seems to have passed right over the head of Lawrence Stewart, who wrote the sleeve-note, for he describes its lyrics as "maudlin". Perhaps he was misled by Miss O'Day's buoyant manner, far too jolly for this song. C.F.

TECHNICAL REPORTS



Simon Minstrelle Tape Recorder. Price: 39 gns. Simon Sound Service Ltd., 46-50 George Street, London, W.1.

Every exhibition always has a few items of major interest and the last Harrogate Audio Fair was no exception. Practically every reviewer commented on the excellent new Simon Minstrelle tape recorder not only for its complete breakaway from conventional design but also for its excellent technical specification. In the past the reputation of Simon Sound Services has been built up on equipment they have completely designed and manufactured in their own laboratory and factory. The Simon S.P.2 and S.P.4 machines were both first-class and the S.P.4. still has features not possessed by other makes. However, not everyone is fortunate enough to invest 95 gns. in the S.P.4 plus a further sum for a high-quality microphone capable of doing justice to the recorder.

According to my records there are 44 makes of British and Continental tape recorders on the British market with a total of 117 different models and the greater percentage of these machines lie in the £40-£60 price bracket. To introduce another machine using a proprietary tape deck without any special virtues into this highly competitive field would be a retrograde step. Fortunately when Simon Sound Service decided to enter this field several new tape decks had passed through the prototype stage and were entering bulk production. The Garrard deck which was chosen was the only deck that featured cassette loading coupled with excellent mechanical and electrical qualities. With many years' experience of quality amplifier design to call on, the only outstanding problem was that of its presentation. For several years Peter Bell, one of the foremost industrial design consultants, had styled other Simon products such as the S.P.4 and the Cadenza range of microphones, and he was given the task to design a completely new type of cabinet that would match with domestic surroundings. How successful he was can be seen in the accompanying photograph. THE GRAMOPHONE was fortunate in having one of the first production models for an extended test and during this time every visitor to my home has remarked on the outstanding appearance and performance of the machine.

Description

The equipment is housed in an attractive veneered wooden cabinet with sloping sides and short dumpy legs finished in black and gold. Sensibly the feet have soft rubber buffers so that other furniture is not marked, and mechanical noise from the deck is reduced to a minimum. The bottom of the cabinet has a removable louvred wooden rectangular plate giving easy access to the amplifier valves. The whole of the deck, amplifier and controls can be removed from the cabinet in a few minutes, making any servicing that might be necessary a very easy task. I only wish other designers would pay so much attention to this important feature where so often one has to unsolder several leads, and then find that the machine cannot be tested away from its cabinet.

The Garrard tape deck will only be referred to briefly in this report, as I hope to deal with this item at length in a future issue. Basically it uses two Garrard motors, one driving the capstan and which runs continuously, whilst the second is used for rapid rewinding. The whole assembly is very rigid, with negligible mechanical noise when in operation. The working of the deck is simplicity itself. The tape is housed in a transparent moulded cassette, and records from left to right. Operating at one speed only, of 3.75 i.p.s., about 35 minutes' recording time is available on one track. When this track is recorded, one lifts off the cassette, reverses it and then records on the second track. Without any particular skill the changeover can be made in less than two seconds. Two levers operate the various functions of the deck. One lever operates the rapid rewind, and the second has three positions, play, off and record, with a safety push-button. The erase head and the record/replay head are mounted in a common casting, with means of adjusting the azimuthal position of the record/replay head. Intimate contact is made with both heads by means of highly polished fixed bars for the erase head and a spring loaded felt pad for the record/replay head. The whole deck is finished in off-white and black mouldings and has a most attractive appearance.

The recording/replay amplifier follows good engineering practice. With the exception of the mains transformer all the components are mounted on a long chassis extending from one side of the deck to the other. One novel feature of the Minstrelle is the use of a crystal microphone that is built in behind the front grille. Naturally, due to the close proximity to the motors and moving parts, there is a slight tendency for it to record these noises in addition to the intended recording. However, when one wishes to use a higher-quality microphone, such as the Cadenza, a screened socket at the rear of the cabinet automatically cuts out the inbuilt microphone on insertion of the jack. The first stage of the amplifier uses a low-noise Mullard EF86 stage that is resistance-capacity coupled to the triode part of an ECL83 via a volume control potentiometer. One can also feed into the second stage a signal derived from radio or gramophone via its own volume control. A negative feedback circuit taken from the output of the second stage introduces the necessary compensation for recording conditions and follows the C.C.I.R. characteristic. The second stage is coupled to the second half of the ECL83 pentode stage by a frequency compensated R.C. coupling. Under recording conditions the output from this stage is fed to the recording head together with a high-frequency bias voltage.

When the selector switch is placed in the replay position the output from the third stage is fed to one of a pair of output EL84 valves whilst the other EL84 derives its input signal from a phase inverter stage using the triode portion of an ECL83. The pentode part of this valve operates as the erase and H.F. bias oscillator operating at about 50 Kc/s. In order to judge the maximum modulation level on the tape during recording, a Mullard EM84 Magic Eye Indicator is used. This latest form of indicator gives a form of display that is particularly useful for recording. With zero input one can see two short bars of light and as the modulation percentage is increased the bars lengthen.

Power for the whole amplifier is derived from a large mains transformer that operates at a low flux density and remains quite cool even after long periods of operation. Resistance capacity smoothing is used, and the main H.T. voltage is 280 so that all electrolytic capacitors are operated well within their rated capacity. The built-in loudspeaker is an elliptical type, 7 in. by 4 in., giving reasonably good quality for the relatively small cabinet. The controls are mounted in front of the Garrard tape deck and are as follows, reading left to right: (1) Microphone record level; (2) Radio or record level; (3) magic-eye indicator; (4) tape replay volume and record monitor; (5) combined treble cut or bass cut tone control; (6) on/off switch combined with erase cut-out. The latter function is one of the other unusual features in a machine in this modest price category, for it enables one to superimpose speech or music on a tape which has already been recorded with other information. In addition to its functions as a tape recorder the instrument can also be used as a straight amplifier for use with a gramophone pickup, microphone or radio feeder unit.

Test report

The manufacturers do not publish any performance figures, and in view of the optimistic figures one sees for certain other tape machines one can appreciate their reasons. If the manufacturer published strictly factual information it could never bear comparison with other manufacturers' printed claims, and I hold very strong views about this form of irresponsible publicity. To the knowledgeable these claims, particularly for frequency response, harmonic distortion and power output, are farcical. To the *ab initio* newcomer into this field they are patently falsehoods, and in any case the purchaser does not understand what they mean! What really matters is whether the apparatus fulfils its purpose, the quality of recording and reproduction coupled with its cost.

The following measurements were undertaken and the figures obtained make the Simon Minstrelle appear to be a remarkable value-for-money machine.

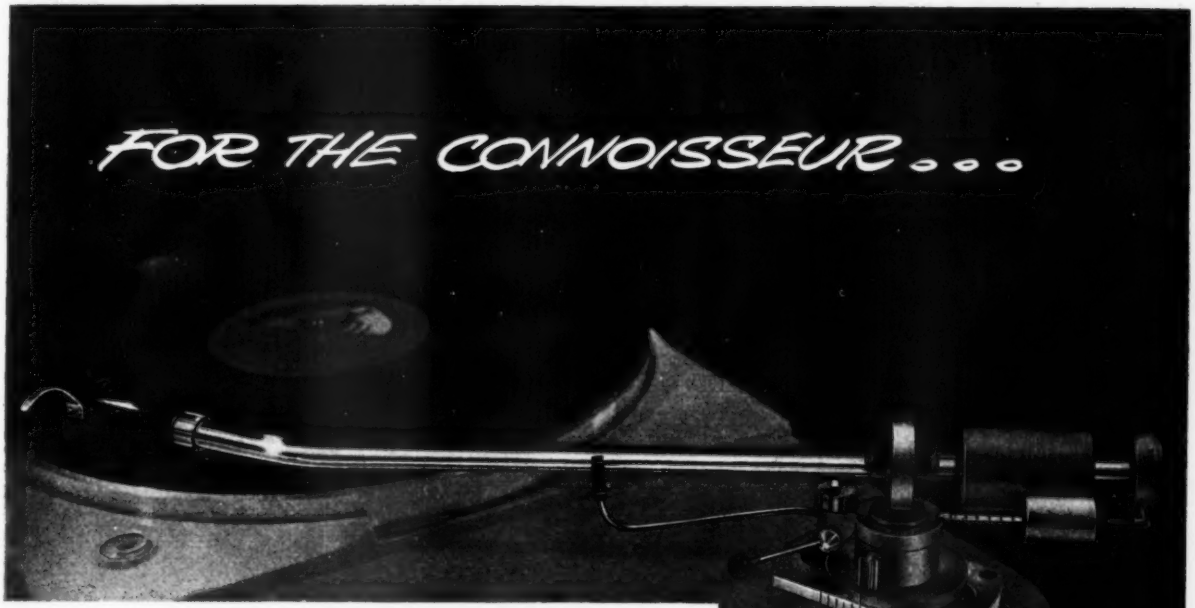
Maximum undistorted power output at 1,000 c/s: 3.1 watts
Harmonic distortion at 1,000 c/s at 1 watt: 0.6%
Harmonic distortion at 3 watts output at 15 Kc/s: 0.4%
Harmonic distortion at 3 watts output at 1 Kc/s: 1.6%
Harmonic distortion at 3 watts output at 40 c/s: 2.2%
Frequency response relative to 1 watt output at 1 Kc/s:

c/s	40	80	100	300	500	1K	2K	5K	8K	10K	20K	25K
db	+5	+5	+4	+2	+1	0	−0.5	0	+1	+1	−2	−5

Tone control range: Bass cut −10db at 40 c/s
Treble cut −20db at 15 Kc/s
Sensitivity:
High impedance microphone input for 3 watts at 1,000 c/s: 8 mV.
High impedance radio or gramophone input for 3 watts at 1,000 c/s: 495 mV.

All the above figures were measurements made on the amplifier only and do not take into account the tape deck characteristics. The following figures are the results of a number of tests made by applying a constant amplitude signal to the tape and producing 1 watt across the internal loudspeaker at 1 Kc/s.

Frequency	Power output	Remarks
40 c/s	−11 db	Slightly distorted and inaudible.
60 c/s	−7 db	Little distortion and hardly audible.
80 c/s	0 db	No distortion and audible.
	then flat within 0.5 db to 4 Kc/s	
5 Kc/s	0.5db	No distortion and audible
6 Kc/s	−2.0 db	No distortion and audible.
7 Kc/s	−4.0 db	No distortion and audible.



SME

MODELS 3009 & 3012

PRECISION PICK-UP ARMS

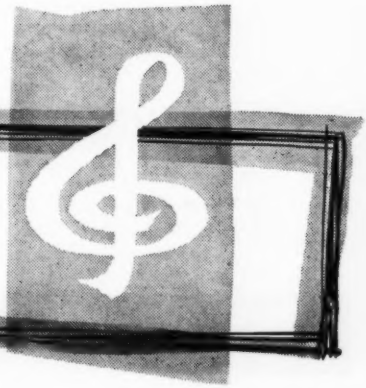
If you desire the very highest quality of reproduction with negligible record wear we shall be pleased to send you a detailed specification of these superb arms.

Their many features include:—Mirror finished pillar bearings. Arm carried on virtually frictionless knife edges. Automatic lowering and raising anywhere on the record by hydro mechanical control. Sliding base for instant tracking correction. Vertical height adjustment. Unique system provides for lateral and longitudinal balance of arm. Stylus pressure range 0-5 grammes. No weighing device required. Suitable for all stereo and mono cartridges, Decca ffss, Expert special, Ortofon Heads, etc. permitting hitherto unattainable quality.

Prices: Model 3009 9" Arm £18. 15s. 0d. + £6. 5. 0d. U.K. P.Tax.
Model 3012 12" Arm £20. 12s. 6d. + £6. 17s. 6d. U.K. P. Tax.

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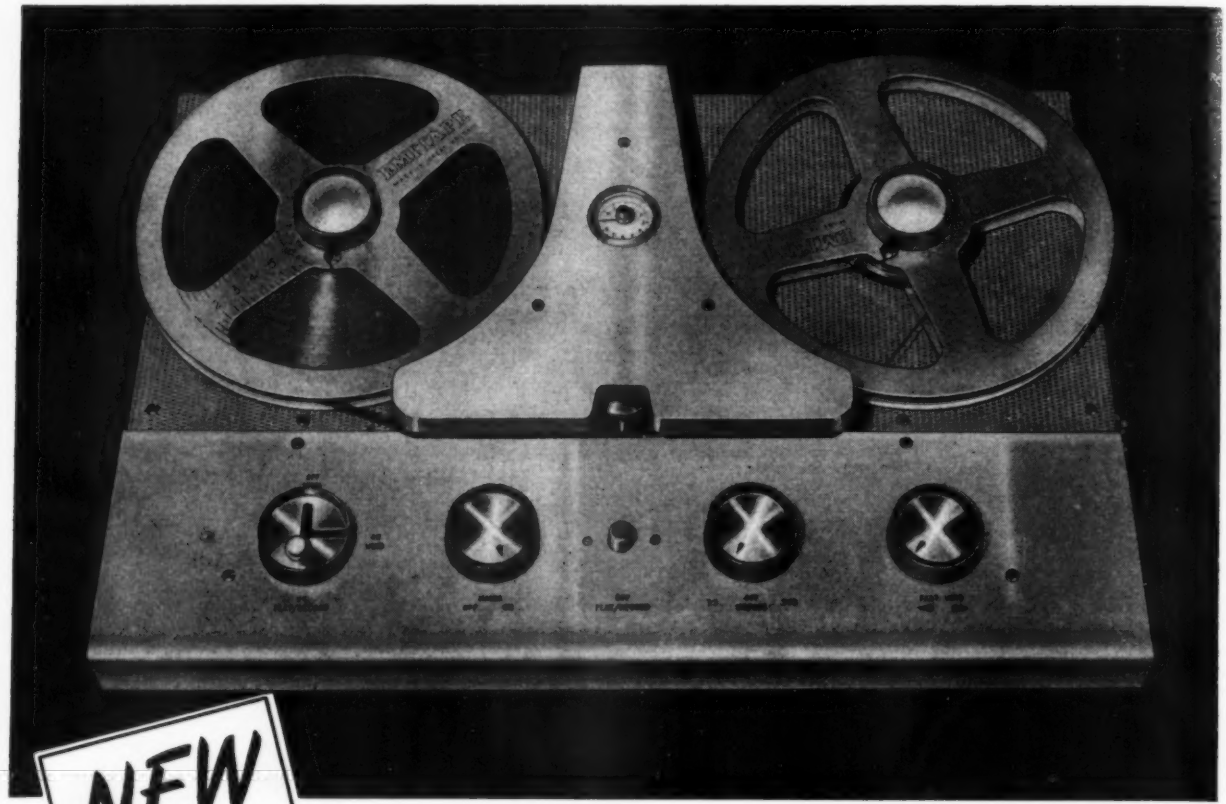
A NEW MUSICAL EXPERIENCE



Manufactured by :—

S. M. E. Ltd. STEYNING, SUSSEX, ENGLAND

TELEPHONE: STEYNING 2228



A tape deck of the utmost reliability and versatility

★ Utmost reliability—no rubber pulleys to wear—no belts to break.

★ Instant start and stop. Single knob electrical variable speed wind guaranteed not to stretch double play tape. 1,200 feet wound in 45 seconds. Capacity for up to 8½″ reels.

★ Heavy duty, direct drive, reversible (if required) synchronous motor, 2 special Garrard reel motors.

★ Auto stop, 2 speeds 7½ and 3¾ i.p.s., Precision tape indicator. Standard rack size (19″ width).

★ Exclusive head assembly, with open access for easy threading and editing permits up to 3 heads to be installed on each side of the capstan for 2-way operation. 1, 2 or 4 track mono and 1 or 2-way stereo operation available.

Styled by Douglas Scott, M.S.I.A., and developed and manufactured at Chelmsford, the Multimusic Deck is an instrument of the utmost reliability.

Enquiries are invited from manufacturers of high grade audio equipment.

The new Reflectograph Tape Recorders incorporating this new Multimusic tape deck will shortly be available to the public. Watch out for further announcements.

World wide patents applied for.

MULTIMUSIC LIMITED · MAYLANDS AVENUE · HEMEL HEMPSTEAD · HERTS

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Measurements above 7 Kc/s were difficult to make as the input signal derived from a distortionless audio frequency generator caused beat tones with the H.F. bias oscillator. However, due to the slow speed of the tape at 3.75 i.p.s. one would not expect much output above 7–8 Kc/s.

A number of recordings were made both with the built-in crystal microphone, a new Lustraphone high impedance moving-coil microphone and from a R.C.A. FM tuner. As one is informed in the accompanying instruction manual, the built-in microphone picks up some of the tape deck motor noise, but it is at a low level and does not interfere with the fun one can have with a tape recorder which has a concealed microphone. Using an external microphone the background noise completely disappears and the quality of the reproduced sound is then dependent on the external microphone. The new Lustraphone unit is a considerable improvement over the usual crystal microphone supplied with tape recorders, and some good-quality recordings were made. Using a high-quality signal from the R.C.A. FM tuner gave the best results with an overall quality comparable to a very good medium wave radio receiver. Using the Minstrelle as a direct amplifier from radio or a gramophone pickup gave a quality comparable with a small radiogram with a slight colouration at sound levels too high for a medium-sized lounge.

Several recordings were made using the bias erase switch so that speech could be superimposed on a musical background. This worked quite successfully with no significant change in the quality of either the musical background or speech. Considering the various facilities offered by the Minstrelle tape recorder, its outstanding design and good performance, it represents excellent value and is quite comparable with some other machines selling in the £45-£50 price range. It is a worthy baby brother to the Simon S.P.4, and with the ease of cassette loading and its styling will become a very popular recorder with the ladies.

JOHN GILBERT

TECHNICAL TALK

By PERCY WILSON, M.A.

More about Record Playing Conditions

The analysis published last month on Optimum Playing Conditions was actually written for our November issue but had to be held over both then and for December by reason of pressure on space.

Since September when it was written, I have made a good deal of progress in the development of my experimental arm to fulfil the required conditions. The anti-vibration mounting now has a resonant frequency well below 1, yes one, c/s, so that for all practical purposes it may be taken as aperiodic. I mention this since the region 1 to 3 c/s may be very tricky. The reason is that

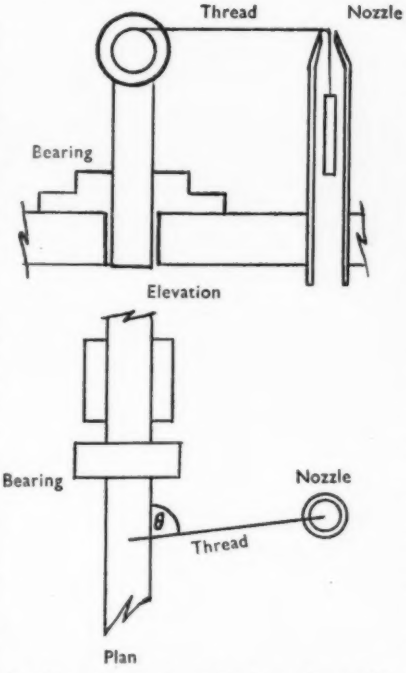
78 r.p.m. = 1.3 r.p.s.
33⅓ r.p.m. = 0.5 r.p.s.

A "swinger" or a warped record may therefore induce a vibration in the region between those frequencies and two or three times those frequencies which might seriously affect the stability of an arm mounting which had a resonance thereabouts.

That, apparently, was why I lost my immunity for a while.

I gave an exhibition of the various stages of the development during a lecture to the B.S.R.A. at the end of December. This and the demonstration of the use of a strip of paper to measure the frictional effect of the bearings in the S.M.E. arm (as described in our December issue) attracted a great deal of interest, as did also the device I have incorporated for counterbalancing any (long period, but not instantaneous) changes of pressure in the contact between stylus and groove. This latter effectively neutralises the effects due to friction, provided these latter are not over-large—which they are not when the alignment, playing weight, and other conditions I mentioned have been fulfilled.

I also took the opportunity during this lecture to show the device of glass tube, thread and weight for counteracting side-pressure which, as I said last month, had been suggested to me by a correspondent. Since some readers have also expressed interest in this I give a diagram herewith showing how the device works. A piece of nylon thread (fishing-line variety is good) is attached to the arm in front of the vertical bearing and is then taken through the nozzle in the vertical glass tube to a weight hanging freely inside. The thread is attached to the arm between 1 in. and 2 in. in front of the vertical



bearing. When the stylus is at the outside groove of the record the angle θ should be between 75° and 80°. The change of angle as the arm traverses the record then almost exactly matches the change of side pressure due to inward swing. For a 3-gram playing weight the counterbalance weight has to be about 5 grams; a piece of brass rod therefore suffices. If the playing weight is less the counterbalance is of course reduced as well.

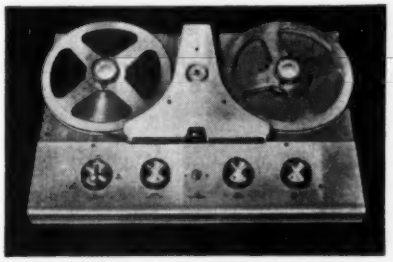
The First Stereo?

Another picture I showed also attracted amused attention. I was indebted for this to a reference in our American contemporary, *Hi Fi Review*, to a new book called *The Evolution of the Phonograph* by Oliver Read and Walter Welch. They have discovered that one of Edison's early British patents describes a three-channel device using three cylinders on one drum and three separate sound-boxes attached to three horns. The principle of simultaneous multi-channel recording was therefore established by Edison in 1888. It was not, however, exploited by him. The development of a commercial machine had to wait until 1898 when the Columbia Phonograph Company produced their "Multiplex Gramophone Grand". It was priced at $1,000, which I suppose would equal well over £1,000 of our present-day currency, and the first model was bought by the Shah of Persia.

New Tape Recorders

It is a far cry from these early attempts at multi-channel reproduction to the modern developments of disc and tape. More than two channels in a single groove of a disc hardly seems to be feasible. But multi-channel tapes are already with us. Cinerama had 5, and 3 are now more or less commonplace; my friend Alan Stagg regularly uses them at the I.B.C. (International Broadcasting Corporation) and Rank Cintel gave a particularly impressive demonstration at the Harrogate Audio Fair.

Now we are to have 4-track domestic recorders, though here the tracks will be used either in sequence or two by two and not all simultaneously. We reviewed the first example to come our way last month: the Telefunken TK76. And a very good example it is. We now have news of a British tape deck of professional standard which has been developed by Multimusic (of Reflectograph fame). I was told about it last August but was pledged to secrecy. The details have now been revealed.



"There are no belts or interwheels and in operation there are only five moving parts. Three of these are the motors, all specifically designed for the job, one being the main drive motor, synchronous or alternatively hysteresis synchronous and two side motors. Instant start and stop is possible. The only other moving parts are the pinchwheel and a gear-driven clock-type tape position indicator. The main motor, which is direct drive, can be reversible, and provision is made in the head assembly unit for 3 heads to be accommodated each side of the capstan.

"Multimusic claim that it is therefore possible to produce for stereo quarter track recording a model which, with professional quality will record one way, stop, reverse and record the other way and then switch off.

"An additional refinement is a provision for a connection, which, when the tape recorder switches itself off will automatically cut the A.C. supply to an amplifier and any ancillary equipment such as a radio tuner unit which may be connected to the recorder deck.

"Open access is provided to the heads for ease of editing and as standard, the deck is supplied for use with reels up to 8½ in. diameter. Fast wind forward and back, which is guaranteed will not stretch or break even the thinnest tape, is entirely electrically controlled by a single knob, and 1,200 feet of tape can be wound in either direction in 45 seconds. A mechanically

locked 'PARK' position holds the reels gently but firmly when the function switch is in the 'off' position.

"The new Multimusic deck which has been styled by industrial designer Douglas Scott, M.S.I.A., is standard rack size—19 in. width and will be used in a new range of Reflectograph tape recorders, details of which will be announced in the near future. However, a new departure in Multimusic policy is that the deck will be supplied to manufacturers of high-fidelity equipment but not direct to the public."

One of the new Reflectographs has been promised to me as soon as they begin to come off the production line and I am looking forward to presenting our readers with a comprehensive test report within the next few months.



Philips EL3538 Tape Recorder

Two other interesting tape recorders, but of the cheaper "domestic" or "family" type, have been announced by Philips, and I hope we shall have an opportunity of reviewing these before long. They are known as the EL3515 which sells at 32 gns., and EL3538 which costs 57 gns. The EL3515 weighs only 18 lbs. and records twin-track at 3¾ i.p.s. It will, however, take reels up to 7 in. diameter, and with a double-play tape will therefore give 4 hours playing time. It includes a recording level indicator and provision for separate inputs and mixing. The EL3538 has 3 speeds (1⅞, 3¾ and 7½ i.p.s.) and is supplied complete with moving-coil microphone, and a 7-in. spool of long-play tape. The controls are of push-button type. The weight is 30 lbs.

A Visit to Sound Sales

When it was suggested that I should review the new A-Z Twin Twenty Stereo Amplifier I took the opportunity of motoring down to Farnham where Roy Wellington and his staff produce a wide range of products. A year or two before the war I built an amplifier designed by W. T. Cocking which was published in the *Wireless World*. In many ways this design could be regarded as the best of its time and the forerunner of many of the superb amplifiers in existence today. Of the few recommended output transformers for the W.W. Quality Amplifier was one marketed by Sound Sales, and as it met the designer's strict requirements and was slightly cheaper than other alternatives I found myself visiting Marlborough Road, Holloway, which was the pre-war address of Sound Sales. Already they were manufacturing transformers and chokes for the Admiralty and other Services and at the outbreak of war they wisely moved down to Farnham.

Situate on the outskirts of this delightful Surrey town—the home of the late Mike Hawthorn, and surrounded by hop fields—is the home of Sound Sales, just off West Street. Although I had often met Roy Wellington and his charming wife at exhibitions and social functions this was the first opportunity of seeing their works. It consists of a rather old, rambling but very large building. The outside appearance is deceptive, for inside is a hive of industry. The main building houses a fine mechanical engineering department with a wealth of machine tools manned by a team of real craftsmen. I was a little puzzled in looking around this part of the factory, but later I realised the significance of the engineering shop.

Roy Wellington is also a motoring enthusiast and tucked away in one of the corners of the workshop was a completely stripped 4½ litre Bentley which Roy is re-building for competition with the Bentley Drivers' Club and Vintage Sports Car Club. Later, in another part of the factory, I saw his self-designed "special" which he hopes to introduce into competition at a later date. But back to the real purpose of the visit to discover something about the manufacture of their products.

The main assembly shop is logically divided into areas devoted to transformer winding and assembly, amplifiers, bulk-erasers, loudspeakers, tuner units and complete custom-built radiograms. It was here that I met Mr. Smith who has been on Roy Wellington's staff for around thirty years and is now in charge of the electronic side of the factory. It was whilst we were inspecting the coil winding section that I realised the significance of the engineering workshop, for all the coil winding machines were designed and built within the factory. Realising the shortcomings of many of the commercial machines Roy Wellington set about the task of producing coil-winders that can deal with wire as thin as a hair and others that wind wire and tape nearly as thick as a slim pencil. There is a really novel machine that produces coil formers to any shape and dimensions required which reflects the great ingenuity and mechanical skill of Roy Wellington and his team. When one considers that over a million transformers and chokes have been supplied to the Admiralty alone one realises the solid foundation on which the firm is built. Admiralty specifications and requirements are one of the most difficult to work to, and the fact that year after year their lordships place contracts with the company is significant and indicative of the skill of the designers and assemblers.

Another section of the factory is devoted to the requirements of the G.P.O., B.B.C. and other large purchasing organisations. A further section particularly intrigued me and that is where they make loudspeakers. Very few loudspeaker manufacturers produce the whole of the loudspeaker but tend to assemble parts made to their own requirements by outside specialist firms. With the available engineering facilities Roy Wellington saw every good reason why his company should produce every part, including the magnet system. The whole unit has stood the test of time and has been well received both by the technical press and the public. The centreing of the diaphragm is done by using a number of spider fingers attached to the cone at carefully determined points. The magnet is fabricated from very heavy gauge steel strip and gas welded to form a magnetic loop with a small stray field. It is an efficient design and the unit when mounted in a Sound Sales cabinet is capable of very good quality and efficiency.

Further wandering brought us to a section that has for many years manufactured broadcast receivers specially designed for use in schools. Percy Wilson had much to do with the acceptance trials of various competing manufacturers for schools broadcast receivers, and the Sound Sales product was one of the very few that was accepted and has been produced in large quantities.

Away from the main building is a demonstration room comparable in size with a domestic listening room and which houses various forms of monophonic and stereophonic equipment. By means of an elaborate switching panel it is possible to connect any of the products in any sequence and directly compare the differences of the various price ranges. I stayed until the normal working day came to an end, and perhaps it is due to the staff working in the delightful local surroundings and in good conditions that one completely missed the usual large factory rush when the bell rang. Slowly the staff drifted away into the evening, leaving Roy, his wife and I to revert back to the days of motor racing at Brooklands, Silverstone and Goodwood.

JOHN GILBERT.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor does not necessarily agree with any views expressed in letters printed. Address: The Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, The Glade, Green Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex.

Stereo Crazy

How well I can sympathise with your correspondent Mr. E. E. Telfer (October) in his disillusions of the reproduction of stereophonic discs. I, too, suffered some twelve months ago and I really mean "suffered", my nerves were frayed, my ear drums pierced and my temper at a very, very low ebb. Stereo! Where's the dustbin? Yes, it was just like that, just like Mr. Telfer.

But, I am a very placid man, I know full well that our stereo technicians are brilliant men, that stereo is not a gimmic. So, I asked myself, "Where am I wrong?". It is an ill wind, etc., etc., so any good that came from my frustrations was that it taught me one thing, if concert hall results are demanded by the listener (and I will settle for nothing less) then concert hall equipment must be used.

Now Mr. Telfer dwells entirely on the disc angle, he hears bad sound, so it is a bad disc. Just how far away from the truth is our friend? I will wager that the "satisfactory" disc that he possesses is an "off colour" recording and that his "worst" disc is a magnificent recording . . . his remarks re surface noise rather confirm this.

If only our friend had divulged the type and make of his equipment I could have pinpointed his troubles as easy as wink . . . or could I?

Now we all know that this is not an advertising column, but I wonder if the Editor would be ever so kind and let me just say that the Decca *ffss* pickup is all that the makers claim it to be. This pickup end is ever so important, so spend the price of ten discs on one of these. The amplifiers? You have a wide choice here, pre-amp. and main amp. with 10 watts per channel should set you back about £50. Turntable? There are five or six excellent transcription units to choose from, all around £28. Speakers, oh! dear me. The choice here is far too wide to list them, tell you what sir, decide your frequency range, you know something like 30 c/s deep down and shall we say something like 17,000 c/s way up? Any frequencies out of this range found in a concert hall should be handed in to the management! Price? Too elastic to quote.

Do I hear you say price fantastic? But, my dear friend, you want sound fantastic! And that is an apt description of every Decca and E.M.I. stereo recording that I possess . . . fantastic.

You are not convinced yet are you? Not really! I am afraid 'tis true though. Oh, yes, your first record, you love it! In the field of electronics nothing gets worse, it can only get better, and I am sure that every reputable manufacturer will admit that his earliest discs were not just quite what he wanted and the absence of background on your pet disc is probably due to lack of "top" in the actual recording. Since then recordings must have

proved to be beyond the wildest dreams of the powers that be. If this were Hollywood one, Mr. Haddy, would be the proud possessor of an "Oscar" by now. If by any chance you have purchased a faulty pressing and I have actually experienced this myself, the background was terrific, return it to the manufacturer for examination. These good people are so jealous of their product and so anxious that we the public should enjoy the fruits of their labours to the fullest possible extent that they will without the slightest fuss whatever replace any faulty copy. They cannot be fairer.

The fact that you find only two out of eighteen to your liking does, I am afraid, point to equipment. There is one more point. Do you buy mint copies? This is a "must". Many dealers will demonstrate a record, maybe once, maybe a dozen times. With what? More often than not a .0007 stylus. O.K. Jack down the road will not mind, he has a ·0007 stylus, so it sits in the groove nicely. But what if you have a ·0005 diamond tracking a groove that has opened up to be compatible to a ·0007? Chase me, Charlie!

Have I been of any assistance, or am I just darned aggravating? I have been through it all myself though. I learned the hard way . . . it cost me too! But every penny spent putting my equipment in order is repaid to me daily by concert performances of the greatest orchestras in the world recorded by Britain's great recordists.

Are you ever in Midhurst? Why not take a day off and give my set-up a hearing? Bring a couple of your "worst" records, you will be most welcome. Just call at the cinema, I am always there except Thursdays. No, I am not picture crazy, I manage the joint! I'm just stereo crazy!

Midhurst, Sussex. W. N. GAY.

The Philharmonia Chorus

As a member of the Philharmonia Chorus, I was of course much gratified by L.S.'s review of our recording of *Belshazzar's Feast*. I feel I must point out, however, that the Philharmonia, like every chorus of that size, is largely an amateur body. True, it possesses a small professional stratum which has recorded independently of the amateurs (e.g. *Die Kluge*) and which formed the semi-chorus in *Belshazzar's Feast*. But this amounts to not more than 10% of the full choir. If a reason must be adduced for the Philharmonia's standards, one need say no more than "Wilhelm Pitz".

Gt. Missenden, Bucks. C. D. BATES.

L.S. replies: Other correspondents have also corrected my misunderstanding of the status of the Philharmonia Chorus. The more credit to it and to its excellent Chorus-master!

Pickups—Mono or Stereo?

In your November issue, Percy Wilson says that I am wrong in preferring a mono moving coil pickup to a good stereo pickup for use on mono records. (He might just as well say that I am wrong in preferring a 'gin and it' to a 'gin and mixed!')

But I do not intend to bore your readers with a study of my likes and dislikes—the practical question of which pickup to use on millions of mono discs is far more important. I will give an actual example of what can happen, which is based on fact—not fiction or theory or idealism!

Exactly two days ago I met a friend who informed me that he had scrapped his mono pickup and his crystal stereo pickup and had installed a Decca stereo model with a new stereo preamp with correct switching to cancel the vertical output when used on mono records. In fact, everything was done according to the book and as recommended by P.W. in THE GRAMOPHONE. And everything in the garden was lovely until my friend played some of his older, favourite, piano records, when he heard a few rattles which made him think that the new pickup was faulty. I told him to stop acting the goat and install a mono pickup with 1 mil point to avoid such annoyance in future.

I entirely agree with Percy Wilson when he says that pickup designers could now design a mono cartridge which would be superior for mono records to either the existing mono pickups or the best stereo pickups. There would surely be a good demand for such an instrument, because classical mono records must still outnumber the stereo types by 100 to 1, if not 1,000 to 1, and a large number of users are not yet converted to stereo and may not be for many years to come.

Bradford, Yorks. G. A. BRIGGS,
Wharfedale Wireless Works Ltd.

Mullard Stereophonic Broadcasting System

Consideration has been given for some time to the praticability of providing stereophonic transmissions of sound broadcasts and a number of methods are at present being reviewed by various bodies. A new system has just been put forward to the European Broadcasting Union for assessment. This is a time-multiplex system and has been developed by G.D. Browne of Mullard Research Laboratories.

"The Gramophone" Exchange & Mart

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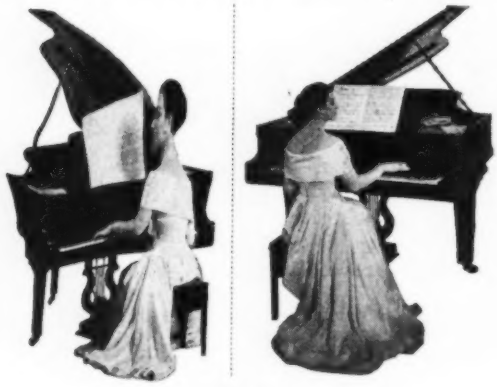
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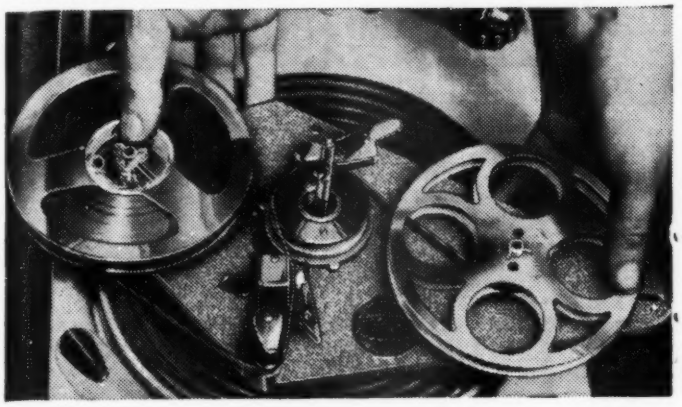
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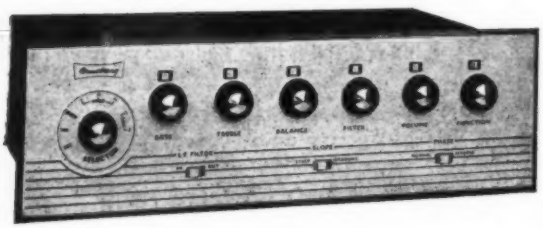
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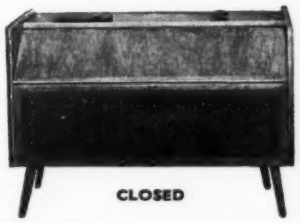
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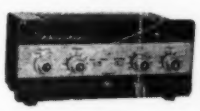
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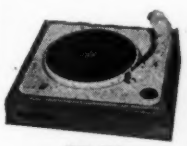
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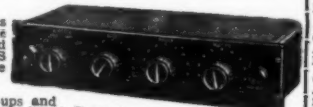
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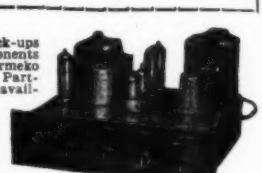
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(a) The KIT OF PARTS to build both the "5-10" Main Amplifier and the 2-stage PRE-AMP CONTROL UNIT **£15.15.0**

(b) The "5-10" and the 2-stage PRE-AMP both ASSEMBLED and TESTED **£18.18.0** H.P. Dep. £3/16/- and 12 months of £1/7/8.

(c) The KIT OF PARTS to build the DUAL-CHANNEL "3-3" AMPLIFIER and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER CONTROL UNIT **£21.10.0**

(d) The DUAL-CHANNEL "3-3" AMPLIFIER and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER CONTROL UNIT BOTH ASSEMBLED and TESTED **£25.0.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £5 and 12 months of £1/16/8.

(e) THE KIT OF PARTS to build one "5-10" MAIN CHANNEL and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMP CONTROL UNIT **£21.10.0**

(f) ONE "5-10" AMPLIFIER and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER both ASSEMBLED and TESTED **£25.0.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £5, 12 months of £1/16/8.

(g) KIT OF PARTS to build Two "5-10" MAIN AMPLIFIERS (incorporating Parmeko Output Transformers) and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER CONTROL UNIT .. **£31.0.0**

(h) TWO "5-10" AMPLIFIERS and the DUAL-CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER CONTROL UNIT BOTH ASSEMBLED & TESTED **£36.0.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £7/4/-, 12 months £2/12/-. Carriage and Insurance 7/6 extra.

Prices quoted are subject to £1/6/- extra for Partridge Transformer.

MULLARD—STERN STEREO DESIGNS

Only New HIOA GRADE Specified Components and MULLARD VALVES are supplied.

DUAL CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER



This model incorporates two Two-valve Pre-amplifiers (described above) combined into a Single Unit enabling it to be used for both STEREOPHONIC or MONAURAL operation. It is designed primarily to operate with our range of MULLARD MAIN AMPLIFIERS but will also operate equally well with any make of Amplifier requiring an input of 200 m/volts. When ordering please advise MAKE and MODEL of Amplifier in use.

COMPLETE KIT OF PARTS **£12.10.0** Alternatively ASSEMBLED & TESTED **£15.0.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £3, 12 months at £1/2/-.

It will operate equally well for MONAURAL Only operation, with one "3-3" or one "5-10" Main Amplifier to which the second Main Amplifier can at any time be added, thus very easily providing for both STEREO or MONAURAL reproduction.

Recommended combinations for STEREO operation.

(a) The DUAL CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER together with the Dual "3-3" MAIN AMPLIFIER.

(b) The DUAL CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER together with two "5-10" MAIN AMPLIFIERS.

The Assembly Manual is available for 3/-.

COMPLETE STEREO AMPLIFIER

A thoroughly recommended design that very effectively meets the many requests for a low-priced but good quality DUAL CHANNEL STEREOPHONIC AMPLIFIER. **Prices:**

COMPLETE KIT OF PARTS **£8.10.0** Alternatively ASSEMBLED & TESTED **£10.10.0**

Two MULLARD ECL 82 Triode Pentode Valves are incorporated in the design, they form a "CLASS A" single-ended output stage in each channel. The input sensitivity is 300 m/volts, therefore when used with most STEREO Crystal Pick-ups, or Radio Tuning Units, an output of 2 watts per channel is achieved, or similarly when switched to MONAURAL Pick-up position a combined output of 4 watts is produced.



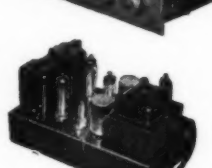
DUAL "3-3" MAIN AMPLIFIER

Comprises two "3-3" MAIN AMPLIFIERS (described above) on one chassis and is designed to operate with our DUAL CHANNEL PRE-AMPLIFIER for both STEREOPHONIC or MONAURAL operation.

Prices:

COMPLETE KIT OF PARTS **£10.0.0** Alternatively ASSEMBLED & TESTED **£11.15.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £2/7/-, 12 months at 17/4. Its output power is 6 watts (3 watts per channel) and together with our PRE-AMPLIFIER provides a first-class STEREO installation.



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Designed by the W.B. "STENTORIAN" Co. for "Hi-Fi" Loudspeaker systems or to accommodate high-quality equipment. The acoustically designed Bass Reflex Cabinets containing the very successful "Stentorian" Speakers give really first-class reproduction and are well recommended. Models are also available to accommodate high - quality Amplifiers, Pre-amplifiers, Tuning Units, Record Players, etc. All models are very easily assembled, in fact only a screwdriver is required. Fully illustrated leaflets are available including complete specifications of the various STENTORIAN LOUDSPEAKERS. Please enclose S.A.E.

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The latest MODELS are in stock. Many at REDUCED PRICES!!! Send S.A.E. for Illustrated Leaflet.

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H.P. Terms available on all units £2/19/6 and over.

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- The COLLARO "CONTINENTAL" 4-speed MIXER Autochanger, Studio "O" Pick-up incorporating Crystal Pick-up **£8.10.0**
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Goodmans 'Axiette' 8in. 3 or 15 ohms. Freq Resp 40-15,000 c/s	£6	12	6
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LOUDSPEAKER ENCLOSURES—TWEETER UNITS—CROSSOVER UNITS are also available.

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TRUVOX MK. VI Tape Deck in stock £26.5.0

Deposit £5/3/-, 12 months £1/18/6.

It incorporates PRECISION REV. COUNTER and PAUSE CONTROL and operates at 3¾ and 7½ inch/sec. speeds. It fully maintains the general high standard of all Truvox equipment, introducing refinements in appearance and ensures high-quality recording, accurate timing and editing. The very popular COLLARO TAPE DECKS and the BRENNELL MK. V are also available from stock.

The "ADD-A-DECK"

incorporating the NEW

B.S.R. "MONARDECK"

and MATCHED PREAMPLIFIER



Deposit £3/12/-, 12 months £1/6/2 (plus 7/6 carr. & Ins.) **£17.17.0**

Designed to operate through the Pick-up Sockets of the standard RADIO RECEIVER through which first-class results are obtained. It consists of a single speed Twin Track Tape Deck, incorporating matched Pre-amplifier and operates at 3¾ in./sec. speed It uses 5-in. Tape Spools thus providing up to 1¼ hours' playing time on L.P. Tapes of 1 hour on the standard 5-in. Tape Spools. The equipment is supplied fully tested and completely assembled on an attractive wood plinth. It can therefore be "dropped" directly into an existing cabinet and only requires connections to the mains supply and the Pick-up Sockets, for which purposes "floating" leads are incorporated on the Pre-amplifier.

Please enclose S.A.E. if ILLUSTRATED and DESCRIPTIVE LEAFLETS are required . . . also the ASSEMBLY MANUALS containing component Prices and Drawings, etc., are available at 1/6 each.

STERN RADIO LTD. Dept. G., 109 FLEET ST., LONDON, E.C.4 Telephone FLEET STREET 5812/3/4

Stern's "fidelity" TAPE EQUIPMENT

STERN'S — MULLARD TYPE "C"
TAPE PRE-AMPLIFIER - ERASE UNIT



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PRICES . . . INCLUDING SEPARATE SMALL POWER SUPPLY UNIT:

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Deposit £3/8/- and 12 months of £1/4/11. Assembled unit only. ALSO AVAILABLE EXCLUDING POWER SUPPLY UNIT FOR **£11.15.0** and **£14.10.0** respectively. (Carr. and Ins. 5/- extra.)

Send S.A.E. for leaflet or 2/6 for Complete Assembly Manual.

We present this "Hi-Fi" Pre-amplifier strictly to Mullard's specification, etc., incorporating ONLY NEW HIGH-GRADE COMPONENTS and the SPECIFIED NEW MULLARD VALVES. It comprises a COMPLETELY SELF-CONTAINED UNIT, all components and valves being contained in a well-ventilated box—Chassis neatly finished in hammered gold with a very attractively engraved PERSPEX FRONT PANEL.

WHEN ORDERING PLEASE STATE MAKE OF TAPE DECK TO BE USED

WE OFFER the following:

(a) The COLLARO "STUDIO" TAPE DECK and our Mullard Type "C" Pre-amplifier and Power Unit assembled and tested H.P. Terms: Deposit £6/10/- and 12 months of £2/7/8. **£32.10.0**

(b) As (a) but TYPE "C" Pre-amplifier as complete KIT OF PARTS **£29.0.0**

(c) The COLLARO Mk. IV TAPE DECK and the MULLARD Type "C" Pre-amplifier and Power Unit assembled and tested .. H.P. Deposit £7 and 12 months £2/11/4. **£35.0.0**

(d) As in (c) but the Type "C" as complete KIT OF PARTS **£32.0.0**

(e) The TRUVOX Mk. VI TAPE DECK and the assembled Type "C" Pre-amplifier and Power Unit ..... H.P. Deposit £8 and 12 months £2/18/8. **£40.0.0**

(f) As (e) but the Type "C" as complete KIT OF PARTS **£36.10.0**

(g) The BRENELL Mk. V Deck and the assembled Type "C" Pre-amplifier and Power Unit **£46.0.0**

(h) As (g) but the Type "C" as complete KIT OF PARTS **£43.0.0**

(i) The WEARITE 4A DECK with Type "C" assembled, tested .. H.P. Deposit £11/4/- and 12 months £4/2/1. **£56.0.0**

(Carriage and Insurance on above quotes 10/- extra.)

PLEASE ENCLOSE S.A.E. WITH ALL CORRESPONDENCE.



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YOU CAN BUILD A COMPLETE TAPE RECORDER

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SEND S.A.E. FOR FULL DETAILS

For Constructors with their own Cabinet—WE OFFER

(a) COMPLETE KIT to build the HF/TR3 Amplifier together with the COLLARO "STUDIO" DECK **£28.0.0**

(b) As above but with HF/TR3 supplied ASSEMBLED and TESTED **£31.10.0**

H.P. Terms: Deposit £6/6/-, 12 monthly paymts of £2/6/2

(c) COMPLETE KIT to build the HF/TR3 together with the Mk. IV COLLARO "TRANSCRIPTOR" TAPE DECK **£30.15.0**

(£1 extra if we are required to wire up Deck Switch Banks). **£34.10.0**

(d) As above but HF/TR3 supplied ASSEMBLED and TESTED ..... (£1 extra if we are to wire up Deck Switch Banks).

(e) COMPLETE KIT to build the HF/TR3 together with the NEW TRUVOX Mk. VI TAPE DECK **£36.0.0**

(f) As above but HF/TR3 supplied ASSEMBLED and TESTED ..... H.P. Terms: Deposit £7/18/-, 12 monthly payments of £3/17/11. **£39.10.0**

(g) COMPLETE KIT to build the HF/TR3 AMPLIFIER with the BRENELL Mk. V TAPE DECK **£41.10.0**

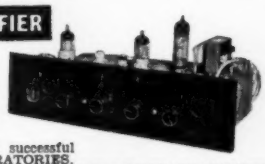
(h) As above but HF/TR3 supplied ASSEMBLED and TESTED ..... H.P. Terms: Deposit £9, 12 monthly payments of £3/6/-. **£45.0.0**

(i) THE ASSEMBLED and TESTED HF/TR3 AMPLIFIER with the WEARITE MODEL 4A DECK, incorporates Wearite Head Lift Transformer, etc. H.P. Terms: Deposit £11, 12 monthly payments of £4/-/8. **£55.0.0**

Carriage and Insurance on each above is 10/- extra.

NOTE: Attractive PORTABLE CASE is available to accommodate the TRUVOX or COLLARO TAPE DECKS and we offer it together with ROLA/CELESTION 10 x 6 LOUDSPEAKER—ACOS CRYSTAL MICROPHONE—and 1,200ft SPOOL E.M.I. TAPE —**ALL FOR £9.0.0** Carriage and Insurance 5/- extra.

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PRICE for COMPLETE KIT OF PARTS **£12.15.0**

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A very high-quality amplifier based on the very successful Type "A" design completed in the MULLARD LABORATORIES. ONLY NEW HIGH-GRADE COMPONENTS are incorporated including MULLARD VALVES and a GILSON OUTPUT TRANSFORMER . . . other features are: Magic Eye Recording Hand Indicator—Effective Tone Control—Monitoring and Extension Speaker Sockets—has own Power Supply and can be used as independent Amplifier for direct reproduction of Gram Records or from Radio Tuner. Overall size: 11 x 6 x 6in—Truvox—Collaro—or Brenell—please specify which. Send S.A.E. for leaflet or 2/6 for Assembly Manual.

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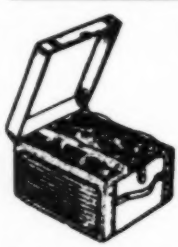
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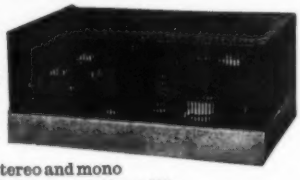
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Stereo Main Amplifier



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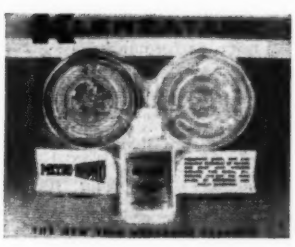


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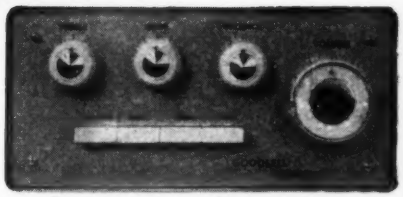
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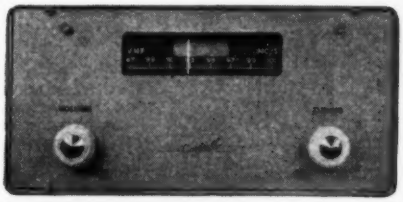
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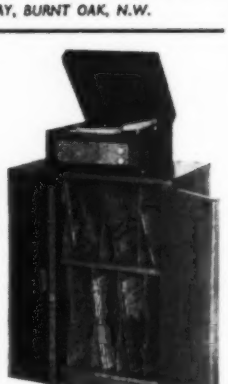
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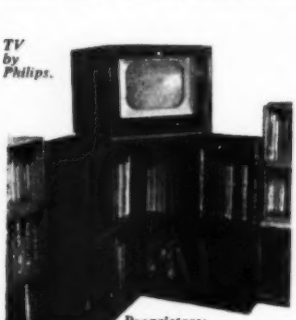


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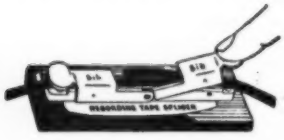
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	PAGE
Acoustical Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	3
Agate & Co. Ltd.	74
Argo Records Ltd.	44
Armstrong Wireless-Television Co. Ltd.	68
Audio-Fidelity (England) Ltd.	45
Auriol (Guildford) Ltd.	79
Avgarde Gallery Ltd.	80
Beam-Echo Ltd.	23
Benfell, F., Ltd.	80
Berrys Radio	79
Bowers & Wilkins Ltd.	80
Brenell Engineering Co. Ltd.	42
British Ferrograph Recorder Co. Ltd.	5
Brown, N. C., Ltd.	79
Chapman, C.T., Reproducers Ltd.	74
Chappell Piano Co. Ltd.	72
Chelsea Record Centre	79
City Sale & Exchange Ltd.	Cover ii
Cleaver-Hume Ltd. (Gramdeck)	67
Cloake, L. & H.	80
Collectors' Corner	28
Columbia Records	19, 47, 48, 49, 50
Cooks of Bedford	78
Crotchet Record Library	76
Davies, A., & Co. Ltd.	79
Daystrom Ltd.	60
Decca Record Co. Ltd.	1, 55, Supplement
Deutsche Grammophon (GB) Ltd.	28, 29
Dickinsons of Pall Mall Ltd.	72
Drawda Hall Bookshop	80
Educational Technical Developments (Radiostructor)	78
Electric Audio Reproducers Ltd.	17
E.M.G. Handmade Gramophones Ltd.	22
E.M.I. S. & S. Ltd. (Recording Eqmpt. Division)	14
Garrard Engineering & Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	51
G.E.C. Ltd.	66
Goldring Manufacturing Co. (GB) Ltd.	52, 56
Goodmans Industries Ltd.	7
Goodsell Ltd.	77
Goodwin, C. C., Ltd.	6
Gramophone Exchange Ltd.	26
Harker & Howarth	80
Harridge, H. C.	65
Heinitz, Thomas	75
High Fidelity Developments Ltd.	75
H.M.V. Records .. 31, 32, 33, 34 Front & Back Cover	
H.M.V. Store, Oxford Street	30
Horns of Oxford	79
Howard Photographic	73
Imhof, Alfred, Ltd.	Cover i, 38, 39
International Collectors' Agency	80
International Record Library	78
Jason Motor & Electronic Co.	4
Keith, Prowse & Co. Ltd.	21
Lanes (Radio) Ltd.	77
Largs of Holborn	41
Laskys Radio	77
Lawrence Wishart (Shostakovich)	79
Leak, H. J., Ltd.	59
Lewis of Westminster	78
Linguaphone	66
Lionnet, John, & Co. Ltd.	64
Long Playing Record Library Ltd.	11
Lustraphone Ltd.	77
"Meltex"	71
Mercury Records	18
Metro-Sound Mftg. Co. Ltd.	76
Millers (Cambridge)	80
Minnesota Mining & Mftg. Co. Ltd.	12
Modern Electrics Ltd.	16
Modern Techniques	9
M.S.S. Recording Co. Ltd.	9
Multicore Solders Ltd.	80
Multimusic Ltd.	62
Northern Radio Services	68
Novello & Co. Ltd.	40
Pamphonic Reproducers Ltd.	53
Parlophone-Odeon Records	20
Philips Records Ltd.	36, 37, 46
Phoenix Group	78
Power, Judd & Co. Ltd.	76
Pye Group Records (Sales) Ltd.	35
Pye Ltd.	15
Qualiton Records Ltd.	26
Record Housing	53
Record Specialities	40
Rogers Developments (Electronics) Ltd.	13
Romagna Reproducers	57, 65
Saville Pianos Ltd.	54
S.M.E., Ltd.	61
Sound Sales Ltd.	60
Stamford, A. L., Ltd.	63
Stave, Henry, & Co.	24, 25
Stern Radio Ltd.	70, 71
Studio 99	79
Stylus Replacement Services	80
Sugden, A. & R., & Co. (Engineers) Ltd.	60
Supraphon Records	27
Tannoy Products Ltd.	44
Tape Recorder Centre	10
Tele-Radio (1943) Ltd.	74
Telesonic Ltd.	76
Vogue Records Ltd.	54
Volmar Ltd.	73
Vortexion Ltd.	2
Vox Productions (GB) Ltd.	41
Wally for Wireless Ltd.	80
Warning Re-Recording of Gramophone Records	65
Watts, C. E., (Dust Bug)	75
W. & N. Electronics Ltd.	56
Webbs Radio	75
Welmec Corporation Ltd.	8
Wharfedale Wireless Works Ltd.	46
Whiteley Electrical Radio Co. Ltd.	58
Winter Trading Ltd.	43

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